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The Judson Papers



THE JUDSON HOUSE IN STRATFORD, CONNECTICUT

The Judson Papers

Marguerite M. Judson



VANTAGE PRESS • NEW YORK

FIRST EDITION

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TO ANN

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Preface

These Papers are based on letters exchanged from 1800 to 1830 between two Judson brothers—quite different in temperament. The correspondence, now in the Historical Society at Stratford, Connecticut, is voluminous because both Eli, who kept a Tavern in Lansingburgh, New York, and his oldest brother, David, whose home was in Fayrefield, Connecticut, enjoyed the postal franking privilege.

David was a prosperous Yankee who ran a country store where he also acted as Postmaster. He was willing to undertake the drudgery of the mail largely because in compensation he could correspond, at no cost, with his numerous family and friends.

This transcription is purely factual. The letters are authentic and have never before been published. It is ardently hoped that some measure of resemblance to persons long dead has been achieved.

M. M. J.

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Introduction

At any hour of the day or night, in our family, we were ready to argue about Great-great-grandfather Eli Judson. A controversial subject, he was discussed with vigor.

Aunt Lela, in her quiet, implacable way, maintained that, being a Judson, he could do no wrong. She insisted that he had devastating charm—granted; that it was his varied interests which caused his Inn to fail—dubious; and that he drank no more with his cronies in the taproom of his tavern than did other gentlemen of his day—ahem!

Since some of us were only connections by marriage of the Judsons, it ill behooved us, perhaps, to point out other characteristics, but we did. We called attention to the fact that Eli was all too frequently involved in visionary schemes, that he seemed but an indifferent father, and, above all, that he appeared to be an irresponsible husband and provider.

In order that a less prejudiced jury may decide, we give him to the public, all family skeletons bared.

M. M. J.

*Condensed Genealogy of the Judsons
after Their Arrival in America*

JEREMIAH

WILLIAM JUDSON

JOSEPH

JOSHUA

m. Sarah Porter (1644)

11 children

one of whom,

JAMES JUDSON

m. Rebecca Wells (1680)

7 children

one of whom,

DAVID JUDSON

m. Phoebe Stiles (1713)

10 children

one of whom,

ABNER JUDSON

m. Hannah Curtis (1756)

8 children

among them

DAVID JUDSON

b. August 11, 1757

ELI JUDSON

b. September 17, 1770

CHAPTER ONE

Eli's Partner, Simeon Johnson

The taproom of the Tavern was warm and bright. Whenever the door opened to admit a new customer, the snow blew in gustily, the smoking candles flickered and all but went out. Long wavering shadows danced on the wall, while around the corners of the house the wind shrieked. Near the door stood puddles of water, for the roads were ankle-deep in slush. The door swung many times to let men in, men bundled up to their eyes in ulsters and mufflers. It was bitter weather in upper New York State—the coldest winter in years, that winter of 1805.

In a protected corner, beside a great iron stove that glowed red-hot, sat Simeon Johnson, cozy as a cat. He was pondering on what might bring men out in such raw weather. He and Eli Judson were co-owners of the Phoenix Inn, so, for the good of his pocket, it behooved him to know. It was Saturday night—that would explain it, Simeon concluded. With the week's work done, a couple of hours remained to while away between early supper and bath time.

They come in fair numbers to drink, thought Simeon, but his agile mind flew irrevocably to the candlesticks so

neatly placed in a row on the pine table in the entry. These candles, which were supposed to light weary travelers to the upper rooms, were all too seldom used. It was upon a constant stream of overnight guests that he and Eli had largely counted. Eli's enthusiasm had been impossible to withstand, for he had a way with him, no doubt of that, but Simeon should have kept his head. Even though he had decided to risk his own capital, he should never have persuaded his two devoted sisters to paste their wafers, with minute care, on a document in which they renounced their dower rights. He recalled how grateful he had been as he read, "I, Almira Dole, and I, Phebe Janes, for the sum of one dollar from Brother Simeon . . ." Clearly he could hear again their gentle voices as they exclaimed, "It will be so good for the Inn to have land that has not been plowed. It will raise celery, parsnips, asparagus, gourds, salads, potatoes and other esculent roots." Dear, timid, generous sisters—so ready to do what their menfolk asked of them as though the voice of God had spoken. Their loving trust only served to make him angrier at himself—or was it at Eli?

It seemed unjust to blame Eli altogether, yet there was bitterness in the back of Simeon's mind. You could not chide any man for being elated about the projected Canal; everyone upstate had been crazy on that subject since 1789. In that year Elkanah Watson had moved from the Massachusetts Colony to Albany. Once he'd seen Hudson's River, nothing would do but to join it to the Great Lakes by a waterway such as had never been paralleled in any other part of the world. It became an obsession with him. His words were passed from mouth to mouth until the countryside buzzed with rumor and excited talk.

Eli, who was one to get around and listen carefully, judged that the eastern end of the Canal would probably be north of Troy, opposite the little town of Lansingburgh, where he was a clothing merchant; its course would be likely to follow the Oneida Lakes; nothing was lacking but the approval of the Legislature in Albany—and that was a matter

of only months now—and on and on. This talk made the Canal imminent, an actuality, a stone's throw away. A Tavern to welcome passengers from Buffalo or points even further west had, therefore, seemed a wonderful idea. Now it appeared that both of them had been overly optimistic. Simeon had put up his hard-earned cash and his sisters' legacies, whereas Eli had leaned heavily on his prosperous brother David of "Fayrefield,"* Connecticut, for capital. Hence Eli, personally, had little at stake. Perhaps this was a trivial matter, but Simeon found it galling.

Nor had Simeon's been the glory and honor of calling upon Abraham Jacob Lansing that March day in 1795 when the property was bought. It was the Squire of Schaghticoke Tract himself who owned the coveted house and ground. A place as Dutch as his name, with small-paned windows, wooden shutters, sloping roof and trim gardens before and behind. No! It was Eli who put on his fine blue broadcloth laced with gold. It was Eli who touched his frills and tied his pigtail in the latest fashion. Simeon, to be sure, would have trembled to pay such a visit, for there was endless gossip about the Squire's English silver; his newer American tea set, made in Albany by Isaac Hotton; the dark oak furniture, elegantly carved, from Holland; the vast extent of his lands and his fortune. The Patroon's domain of hundreds of acres began almost where Rensselaerwyck left off, down river. It edged the Hudson for many miles. It also extended eastward, "to the high hills" (so the grant stated), and did that not mean the Green Mountains of Vermont?

All of this splendour, to Simeon's way of thinking, had impressed Eli little. To be sure, his partner, who spent other people's money so readily, considered an eighty-pound mortgage on the Inn an excellent and practical plan. Simeon had his doubts. It was taproom talk how Eli had entered the great man's office and made him a bow worthy of the

* Now, Fairfield

Court, while old Lansing remained seated in an armchair from which he could watch the river. As they talked, Eli's droll wit, his ease of manner and his charm, tickled Abraham Jacob. Home-brewed ale was called for. The Squire smoked his meerschaum pipe with deliberation as they sat long over their cups in a gentlemanly preliminary to the business in hand. Several rounds were not amiss, Eli later told Simeon, for John Van Rensselaer had to write out the bill of sale, which he and Nicholas Schuyler would witness. A high moment indeed when Eli was finally the owner, with Simeon of course, of "That certain House and Lot of ground . . . together with the Liberty of the Commons for cutting wood and timber, and pasture for all communable cattle and beasts subject always to the yearly rental of five shillings yearly & every year on the first of March forever."

With two wings added, the house thus acquired was sizeable enough for an Inn. Soon a big sign was placed conspicuously on State Street. This depicted a gorgeous, bright-colored phoenix, rising triumphantly from its ashes. Later on, to Eli's delight, a neat white fence surrounded the gardens, the icehouse, the stable and outbuildings. These occupied the entire block between Market and North Streets. It was a well-planned arrangement—although at times costlier than Simeon approved. However, Eli drove hard where his wishes were concerned and improvements were made despite Simeon's grumblings.

Yes, thought Simeon, he had been engulfed in a world of fantasy. He had expected great things from his share in the Tavern, he had blazed with hope. Now he sat by the stove, a furious, disillusioned man. He boiled with rage to think of the money, long labor, and weary hours' work he had sunk in this wretched venture. Besides the large house with its fourteen bedrooms, they had had to care for two horses of their own as well as any that the guests brought; urge the cows to the Common mornings, switch them back at night; grow and harvest grain; stack cords upon cords of wood in the yard, awaiting the first autumn chill. The climate was

harsh, the simplest things hard to come by. Cash—whether American dollars, English pounds, shillings and pence, or Spanish money—was as scarce as scarce. Simeon groaned aloud to think of the bills, some of them as much as five years overdue. Worst of all, to his way of thinking, was the memorandum that came to Eli regularly, in regard to half of a pew in the brick church. How could his partner go to service week after week, walk the aisle with benign step, tranquilly sit in the unpaid seat and take a pious part in the service?

Again—it was Eli who talked with his cronies about the high cost of living, but it was Simeon who worried over it. Corn, three dollars for two bushels; hay, six shillings per hundredweight; wheat, seventeen shillings a bushel; oats, not to be had at any price. Wild pigeons, duck and geese abounded, but sturgeon were now rare in the river and turkeys were getting shy of the settlements.* Meat of all kinds, high—except mutton. Many thousand sheep had been boiled up, the tallow saved, the soup and meat fed to the hogs—a new method, indeed, of fattening pork! Simeon's head ached with it all. He sighed as he opened his eyes in an effort to banish the nightmare bills.

Nearby, at the bar stood Eli, apparently without a care in the world, the center of an admiring group. Simeon could hear the voices, at first subdued then louder as the rum went around. He fancied he heard his name mentioned just before a burst of raucous laughter, and his fury mounted. Were they making coarse jokes at his expense? Was he always to be the butt? Was Eli to play the lordly gentleman forever while he, Simeon, drudged and slaved? Did Eli mean it when he hinted that the partnership be dissolved? The conversation hummed on and glasses tinkled merrily, but Simeon's thoughts remained gloomy. No longer would he stand this sly ridicule and thankless labor. He'd be damned if he'd

* Not much like Illinois, where, many years later, five twelve-pound birds could still be bought for a dollar.

stay by the sinking ship. Ship! The word re-echoed in his brain. What easier than to go to Baltimore soon—maybe tonight—and sail on a vessel to the West Indies? The docks were bustling, the city big; he would never be missed until too late. He could imagine Eli's amazement and chagrin when his departure was discovered. Simeon smiled sourly.

He rose as naturally as he could and left the taproom unnoticed. In quiet haste he packed his saddle bags, hurried to the barn and bridled two horses. So convinced was he that speed and secrecy were essential to the success of his design that the indignant, tormented man did not even bid his wife farewell. We know that his plan succeeded, for Eli received a letter from him written in Baltimore.

Dear Sir:

Tomorrow morning I shall sail for the West Indies, Cape Francois or Ptaprince. As you were determined to dissolve partnership, I bring our business to a close. It was no longer necessary for me to stay and slave away 2 or 3 years to do that which anyone would as well do, and from the strong desire which you and your friends discovered to have me out of the way, I concluded, for my Interest to place myself in a situation to be doing something else.

The horses which I took with me turned out poorly indeed. The amount of them I shall remit to you so that our creditors shall not accuse me of taking away any property which ought to be applied to the payments of our debts. I have barely enough to pay my passage—wherewith to support me for a short time until I get into business. After I arrive at the West Indies you will hear from me. You may let my Family and Friends know where I am and that I am well. I take passage in the Schooner Ariel, Capt Jenks.

You must take such measures with respect to our

buisness as your friends shall advise. I should suppose, however, it would be most for the interest of our endorsers to keep the Buisness going until next spring, by which time the paper may be reduced. As they have a Judgement on all our property to secure them, I feel that my exiling myself can in no way affect them, and for our other Creditors the course that you had determined (and I have reason to think for a long time) would take it out of my power to fulfill my engagements made with them. I was therefore compelled to sacrifice everything, to abandon everything—except my Liberty which would be of no benefit to anyone but myself. The treatment, the Indignities, the base—but I will be cool. I have written several letters and consigned them to the flames and have endeavored to suppress my feelings in writing this.

Yours etc.

Simeon Johnson.

A few days later when he forwarded this missive to his brother David in Fairfield, Eli added this postscript:

I send you this without comment. He has sent nothing to his wife than what is in the letter. The fellow has not been to see her that I know of and she is very much dejected and does not know what to do. If she had any possible means of support, I have no doubt she would be glad he is gone tho she loved him too much. Nothing new has taken place, the weather is Bad, and buisness dull—'tis late Thursday night. Our love to you and wife.

Yours etc.

E. Judson

CHAPTER TWO

Perishable Steam

*Soon shall thy arm, unconquered steam! afar
Force the swift barge, or drive the rapid car;
Or on wide wings extended bear
The flying chariots through the fields of air.*

Erasmus Darwin. 1732-1802

It was now wintertime of 1806-07 and rumors, as wild as those of the Canal's early days, were flying thick and fast throughout the countryside. Although communication was slow, although telephones were yet to come, news traveled with astonishing speed. It percolated even through the forests to the most remote clearings and log cabins. At the crossroads, about the cracker barrels, around tables in the Phoenix Tavern, men debated the subject that had everyone in a dither—Steam. Late into the night, keen but slow-thinking rustics struggled to peer into the future, to predict what such a discovery might mean to commerce, the country, and the price of oats. Little by little they learned about Robert Fulton, who was the present promoter of this revolutionary force. He had been a pretty successful farmer over in Pennsylvania, but he had dropped that to paint

miniatures for a silversmith in Philadelphia. Later he had gone to London to study art. A Jack-of-all-trades, evidently, for he had also tried many experiments in science. He was one of those who had the new-fangled idea that eventually sailing vessels would be superseded by ships driven, in some crazy fashion, by paddle wheels and boiling water.

The upstate farmers were skeptical—and they weren't the only ones. More cultivated minds in and around Manhattan Island were questioning these theories. It was ludicrous—and hard to believe—that a painter, who, in London, had been a pupil of the great Benjamin West, and who had had a certain vogue, should fancy himself a scientist and attempt to invent something practical. However, disquieting reports brought further surprises. It was ascertained that this Fulton had built a contraption in France which had successfully stayed under water for hours, with three men and a candle in it. This object, called a *sous-marin*, was named the *Nautilus*, and was hand-propelled. Winds and tides interfered and limited it, yet the knowledge of this thing had prevented the mighty English fleet from entering the harbor at Le Havre. This new menace carried a frightful weapon called a torpedo.

Backers were hard to find, and in later years Fulton said, "Never did a single word of encouragement or bright hope or warm wish cross my path. Silence itself was but politeness, veiling doubts or hiding reproaches." But in Paris in 1802 Chancellor Robert Livingston and Robert Fulton "accidentally met." This wealthy man, of impeccable social standing, had had many a bee in his bonnet, according to his cousin John. Steam was the worst folly yet. When he encountered Fulton he was impressed; in spite of the failures of former experimenters Livingston had faith in this crack-pot. When he reached his home, palatial Clermont Manor, elegant ladies in the colonial withdrawingroom, from behind their fans, made bold to ask him to read what Napoleon in Paris or Mr. Pitt in London had said about all this. He gladly obliged, and declaimed in his sonorous voice: "When

Mr. Pitt first saw a drawing of a torpedo, with a sketch of the mode of applying it and understood what would be the effects of the explosion, he said, 'That if introduced into practice, it could not fail to annihilate all military marines.' "

The ladies, at attention (as ladies will always be at the horrors), shuddered, for additional rumors had it that Mr. Pitt was encouraging this fiendish invention, even offering to buy it in order that Britannia might continue to rule the waves. However, in England, opinions about the torpedo were divided. When Fulton had an interview with Earl St. Vincent, an Admiral in the Royal Navy, and showed *him* the drawings, "the noble Earl, in the strong language of his profession, rather than in a style comporting with his dignity, exclaimed against Mr. Pitt for encouraging a mode of warfare, which, said he, with great reason, 'They who command the seas do not want, and which, if successful, would wrest the trident from those who claim to bear it as a sceptre of supremacy on the ocean . . . ' " What on earth was one to believe? It was all very confusing!

The gentlemen, more interested than the ladies, in the mechanics of the steam engine, were not impressed. Look at John Fitch, they would remind each other. In 1780 he sat down upon a log on the bank of the Ohio River to idly watch the current. He had gone west to survey parts of the wilderness, and as he rested he reflected upon the immense length of the river. He thought it impossible that God in his Wisdom had created a river of such length and irresistible current, without giving to man some power of overcoming the force of the water, so he would be able to navigate it upstream as well as down. When he came East John Fitch had built a steamboat which traveled over two thousand miles. For a year it maintained a regular service from Philadelphia to Burlington, Bristol, Bordentown and Trenton, without serious accident. Those others, too, Ramsey, Henry, and Morey, to mention only the Americans, had gone a step further before the turn of the century. If this Fulton was thinking that he could take their inventions and, without

adding one original part of his own, make a success of this Steamboat—ridiculous! And what about this patent business? Something altogether new which was fixed up solely to protect the steamboat pioneers? “Well, it is a crazy age, what do you expect?” said the Chancellor’s friends, adjusting their queues and straightening their stocks.

Travelers from New York City going north or west carried this talk with them and spread it through the towns. Luckily for Eli Judson’s insatiable curiosity, many stopped at his Inn, if only for a meal. They reported that a ship, unique in every respect, was actually in course of construction down the River at Paulus Hook Ferry. Those who had gone aside to see it, said it was a monster, beyond understanding or belief. Furthermore, they said that the rich Chancellor Livingston was backing the thing with a lot of his money. Say what you would, this hare-brained inventor knew which side his bread was buttered on. He was courting the great man’s niece, Harriet, who was handsome, accomplished, and dowered in her own right.

The months rolled round. Early in August of 1807, Eli learned, on good authority, that on the 17th the Steamboat would have its first trial. This he disclosed to admiring friends. Fulton was asserting stoutly that his vessel would do the distance from Manhattan to Albany, 150 miles, in 30 hours, without sails or other aid from the winds. The bearer of these tidings also reported that the monstrosity would leave the North River, near State’s prison, early in the morning, with Livingston and some of his important friends aboard.

On the 17th of August the trial did take place as announced. On the dock a crowd of the curious, larger than usual, avidly watched the embarkation. It was a gay and excited party that boarded the boat, dressed more for a picnic than for the rough trip it turned out to be. The ladies, carrying parasols, lovely Harriet among them, crossed the plank with appropriate little shrieks. Sly winks and nods from the populace. Fulton, always sensitive, realized that a Livingston

would not condescend to marry a failure, that his reputation and his future happiness were both at stake. Consequently he had some fearful moments when the ship stood stock still in the River after leaving the pier.

This pause delighted John Stevens sitting on the piazza of his huge house on the Heights over in Hoboken. Telescope to eye he was jealously watching the ship, for he was no mean inventor himself. The principles he believed in were at variance with those of Fulton and his brother-in-law, Livingston. As he and Livingston had both failed at several points in different experiments, Livingston was inclined to give Fulton a free hand, but Stevens would have none of that. In later years, speaking of himself in the third person, Fulton wrote: "To produce the first useful steamboat, it required the fortunate circumstances of adequate genius and capital in the same person or persons; he and Mr. Livingston had both."

Picture John Stevens' disgust when frantic repairs solved the trouble, the boat got up steam again, continued its way up the Hudson, and disappeared into the vague distance. This was Success; so 24 hours later, before disembarking at Clermont Manor, Robert Livingston mounted a platform and in a graceful speech announced the engagement of his niece, Harriet, to Robert Fulton.

The first night the guests had lain on bunks and improvised beds on the shaking, rattling boat. Now all the luxury of the great estate was at their disposal, and the most was made of it. There were twenty-eight thousand acres, slaves, indentured and bond servants beyond number, all the magnificence and splendor that the fortunate ones of the day took for granted. Next morning the hardier again boarded the Steamboat (long miscalled the *Clermont* in school books), which continued its slow but triumphant progress to Albany. The curious rushed to the riverbanks to watch for the ship. Finally, in the distance, could be seen a smudge of smoke, then a pulsating rhythm was heard, and, far away, out of the course of Nature, came the prodigy. It rattled, it

roared, it belched fire, it scattered water from the paddle wheels all over the place. It was the most breath-taking sight imaginable, and those who had scoffed the loudest now praised it the most vehemently.

We dare assume that Eli was among the first to behold this new wonder, although the fact is not recorded in any letter. Albany was but eleven miles to the south. He had stout horses. His restless spirit would have itched for a glimpse of the marvel. We can imagine him, dressed in a homemade plum-colored suit, wearing a striped vest and rough beaver hat, leaving his little village of 1700 inhabitants behind him. After riding three miles he reached Troy, with a population twice that of Lansingburgh. It was still only a town, however, with big houses and wide lawns along the river. The whole effect, even on the main street, was one of space and open country. From there to Albany Eli threaded the wilderness on a road hardly more than a widened Indian trail. And that was what it had been in the old days—resounding with war whoops in the dark of the night.

How different the view as Eli approached the great city of Albany! Its growth had been fantastic—in 1800, 5,269 inhabitants; in 1810, 32,669. Settled by the Dutch, their influence persisted both in the names of families and in the architecture of the houses. Customs, too, were retained. The young girls learned fine needlework from their mothers or aunts, who taught them, too, to read the Bible. Writing, in the early days, was left to the men, but the training of children or plants was the female province. Life was simple and a bit crude, but “though there was no polish there was no vulgarity.”

The city stretched along the Hudson, the shoreline scarcely marred by the few scattered docks. Several long, wide streets paralleled the River, while straight up the hill to the Fort ran the steep one famous for its “sleighing on little sledges.” Every house had trees in front of it, with

a garden, a well, a green in the rear. All was orderly and neat and sweet. Eli loved it. He strolled about observing the people and their habits. Later, the life on the wharves held him. He heard foreign languages and saw the sailing ships delivering produce from far and strange lands.

Eli vowed to himself that another visit would be timed for the breaking up of the ice. A popular book of the period was Ann Grant's *Diary of an American Lady* with her famous description of the event. "A sound like a long and loud peal of thunder announced the occurrence, and however early in the morning, at once the whole population was at the river's edge. They might be grotesque in nightcaps and garments hastily thrown about them as they arrived. Slaves carrying pails, buckets and baskets set them down in the street anywhere and ran to see. It was a perfect saturnalia," wrote Ann. Eli had never seen this and he sighed, for he loved excitement.

He craved, too, one of the weekly trips to New York and return. Nothing was more glorifying than to be one of the early passengers, it placed one socially. He would have carefully obeyed the posted regulations: "It is not permitted for any persons to lie down in a berth with their boots or shoes on, under penalty of a dollar and a half and half a dollar for every half hour they offend against this rule. A shelf has been added to each berth on which gentlemen will please place their boots, shoes and clothes that the cabins may not be encumbered . . . As the steamboat has been fitted up in an elegant style, order is necessary in order to keep it so; gentlemen will therefore please to observe cleanliness, and a reasonable attention not to injure the furniture; for this purpose one must not sit on a table under the penalty of a dollar and a half each time, and every breakage of tables, chairs, sofas, or windows, tearing of curtains, or injury of any kind must be paid for before leaving the boat." The fines were used to buy wine for the crew.

would gape and question as Eli stood nonchalantly by the
Imagine the admiration at the Inn! The dumb yokels

bar, glass in hand, the whiles he doled out tantalizing bits of information.

For many, the intense exhilaration over steam gradually subsided, but it continued to fascinate Eli. To his joy, in the year 1813, he discovered a man in Troy who was applying it as the motive power to a washing machine. He was immediately intrigued. Few Americans are, or ever were, immune to gadgets—and this one was revolutionary. The inventor claimed it to be economical and insisted that it would save the housewife labor.

Fireplaces with spits, cranes and kettles were the primitive means of cooking, washing, and heating water. To have a washpot or boiler connected to a machine which would keep the water at an even, high temperature was wonderful. We can take for granted that there was no arm to rotate the clothes. Whether it took less time and labor than an iron pot over a wood fire in the yard is a moot question. But cheap, light engines were being imported from England, well suited to the elemental industry of the Colonies, and they were being put to every conceivable use. At any rate, machinery meant air pressures, long strokes, pistons and economy of heat—all dear to the American heart, and to Eli in particular. Off to Troy he rode, and ordered one for his Charlotte.

Now if Fulton's steamboat had belched fire and brimstone and rattled and roared, we may surmise that the new washing machine terrorized the kitchen of the Inn. It also hissed and shook and exuded steam at every crevice. Water oozed and leaked at all the soldered joints. To get the clothes in or out without being scalded required dexterity. The demon demanded constant attention, such as putting a stick on the grate every little while. Perhaps in six or eight hours the laundry would be done, so that Charlotte and Hannah, exhausted with work and emotion, could go to bed.

It interested Eli keenly, nevertheless. He wrote to David and described it with such enthusiasm that a number of the

contraptions were ordered shipped to him and his friends. Eli did not quite approve of the quality:

I think the tub, if properly made is well enough, will be durable, but the other part of the aparatus I think a cheap affair. It is intended as a cheap way of trying the principle, there are many ways of forcing steam in a more durable way than this but it may cost more to begin with. Our own reason will tell us that a Tin boiler cannot last long. It ought to be made of copper, or some more durable stuff than tin.

There were delays, but in early December the models were ready. Eli engaged shipment for them as the wind and rain had unfrozen the River. At Coenties Slip they would be transferred to another "shiper" who would then forward them to Fairfield. Eli advised the Yankees to have grates made by the local blacksmith, for the crosspieces of his were so widely spaced that the firewood fell down between them. The cost of each machine was \$9.75. David was disappointed with the contrivances and wrote so, whereupon Eli replied:

I am sorry the washing machines do not give satisfaction, I know they are at best cheap, shammy things, it is hard that we who had all the trouble of procuring them should be censured by those who received them. I would not undertake to procure five more of the same man, the same time of year, see them ship'd etc. for five dollars; you may recollect that I never spoke of employing the man to make or of getting the same cheap aparatus, and had I not been fearful that you would think I did not like the trouble of getting them, I should have try'd to discourage you from getting them here at all, considering the trouble, expense of freight etc. When mine was made it was brought home in my

absence. When I came to see this whole shammy thing I was out of conceit of it, tho it was as good as any that are made here except for the cover to the tub which was good for nothing. When yours was made I took a great deal of pains to have the best he ever made, by houlding out inducements of much more customs etc. I did not try them with water, I had never heard of any that leaked and the man appeared to be proud of them and I expect if I make the representation to him, he will lay it to some accident in transportation. I had so much scolding to do with him when I got mine that he will think I am hard to please. The same man continues to make a great many for the People of Troy of the same shammy things at one dollar higher price in consequence of the rise of stock.

When we use ours we put a cloth over the top, then shut the cover on and contrive other means to confine the steam which is perishable and will leak at every waste very fast, the tin is apt to get on-soldered, particularly if it is not kept with a sufficiency of water. Some part of mine is already onsoddered, in short I consider them only fit to show the principal in a cheap way.

Family all well. With love to you and yours,
Am as usual

E Judson

CHAPTER THREE

The Settling of Stratford

In 1634, William Judson, Eli's direct ancestor, sailed from England to Concord in the new Massachusetts Colony. There he lived with his family four years and all the while he heard glowing accounts of emptier lands to the Southwest.

On the shore that was soon to become Connecticut, two tribes of Indians lived a peaceful life. The Cupheags and the Pequannocks spent their summers at the beaches, fishing, clamming, and eating huge quantities of oysters; for the winters they trekked inland, the squaws carrying the papooses while pied ponies dragged the tribes' meagre belongings to more sheltered valleys. The Cupheags, unfortunately for them, had pre-empted the site destined to become Stratford. The Pequot War in 1637 sealed the fate of these 2500 aborigines.

Two years later, the red and white men signed a treaty which made it safer for the Reverend Adam Blakeman and 24 others of the Massachusetts Colony to move on to Connecticut. In the group were William Judson and his three sons, Joseph, Joshua, and Jeremiah. The men who comprised the unit were simple, honest, God-fearing Englishmen. It

was said that "the causes and conditions of the Puritan exodus insured among the first comers more than ordinary respectability of social position—and many of the families had had arms granted them at home and several were of very ancient and honorable lineage."

Plans for the new village were discussed before the adventurers left the security of Massachusetts. Shortly after they reached Connecticut, home lots of from one to two acres were parcelled out, and the History of Stratford states that "so agreeable was the division and laying out of the town that it is but little changed after three centuries."

William Judson judiciously chose Lot No. 2 close under Watch Tower Hill. This gave him as good protection from an Indian attack as was possible. Only the Rev. Blakeman had as large an allotment, so we surmise from this and also from the frequency with which the Judson name appears in the records, that William, his sons and grandsons were persons of some importance in the community.

Singly, by his own efforts, or all working together, the land was cleared. A rough-hewn log cabin was raised on a strongly laid stone foundation. Rude shelter thus provided, William and the others turned to planting, fishing and hunting. There was wild game galore—turkeys, partridges, quail, geese, pigeons, and ducks. In the nearby Sound and streams, crabs and lobsters were easily trapped. These, with myriads of fish, furnished a great variety of seafood.

Once the company was fairly well settled Rev. Blakeman, "a man of learning, prudence and piety," proposed that a Meetinghouse be built in which to worship God. In a short time sturdy men in homespun or broadcloth, their goodwives in gingham or calimanco (a glossy woolen stuff brocaded on one side), were being summoned by drum or bell to the three-hour services. Goodman Peake was the ringer for fifteen years, but after that he was not heard from, "for age hath layd down in ringing the bell." A gallery was added to this Meetinghouse in 1661. Here the boys and the young

fellows loved to sit. Hugh Griffin, a worthy citizen, was appointed to keep a wary eye on these youths. "If any were disorderly they might either be conducted without doors or reported to their guardians."

Four generations after the settling of Stratford Eli Judson was born there on September 17th, 1770. More fortunate than William, his progenitor, he would live in comparative luxury without fear of Indian attacks, in a staunch and beautiful house. Nevertheless, to become doubly orphaned at the age of seven was a tragedy. To endure the hardships of the Revolution at the tender age of five to eleven years provided plenty of training in hardy endurance. It had its thrills, however. A little boy asleep in a hayloft might awaken to hear furtive voices below him in the barn. Listening, he might catch words like "Liberty," "Gunpowder," or "Fight," spoken in whispers, hushed but tense.

Nowhere is it told who cooked, washed and scrubbed for Eli, his three brothers and his two sisters. Spinsters were rare in colonial days, but relicts were plentiful. In any case, "big brother David," the oldest of the family, supplied the younger ones lavishly with love, understanding, and a feeling of security. David kept his brood together with passionate loyalty. He admonished them frequently to reverence God and to act as a Judson should. From him Eli heard many exciting tales of the courage, faith and fortitude of his forefathers. Sunday evenings before a great fire was the special time for these stories, with a prayer or a hymn to solemnize the occasion. Did David deliberately delete some of the legends? For instance, did he tell the story of William's son, Jeremiah, who despite his biblical name ran afoul of the law in his youth? The record is there for all to see: "General Court, May 1669. This Court remits Jeremy Judson the remaynder of the fine that is unpaid which fine was imposed upon him by the County Court, Mch 1st at Fayrefield, for selling cider to the Indians." His son Jeremiah, at the age of sixteen, was also in court for stealing watermelons—which

goes to show that the boys of that day were not unlike some other young men since.

When Eli reached his early teens there were abundant opportunities all about him for a fellow with ideas to make his living. Restless and ambitious, after several tries near home, he left Stratford and settled in Lansingburgh, New York, a small village north of Troy. The date of his arrival there is problematical, but in 1795 his name is found on a contract signed by Eli Judson and the local Squire, Abraham Jacob Lansing. Three years later he was listed as a clothing merchant. The high quality of his goods, the conservative patterns, and his finicky taste, enabled him in a few years to purchase from the same Squire a house big enough to use as an Inn.

Whatever his financial situation was when he met Charlotte Ranney of Middletown, Vermont, he charmed and married her in 1797. His judgment was faultless when, at 27, he selected this young girl of twenty for his wife. That she could not write did not matter, few girls at that time did, Eli was literate enough for them both. Hers was a simple nature, whereas his was complex; she remained placid when Eli flared. His brother David, writing to Eli, refers to Charlotte as "your good wife," and exclaimed to her on one occasion, "How could they get along without you?"

They seldom or never had to do without her. She bore eight children, three of whom died early. There was the Inn with all its cares to oversee. Charlotte was not one to complain, however, of a drudgery which left her no leisure at any time. The labor was continuous and the hours endless. She directed the servants, bought provisions for the boarders, cooked, washed, made jams and jellies from berries the daughters gathered, canned fruits and vegetables. Every spring brought out a large iron pot in which grease and lye were boiled together to make the soft soap—a job dreaded by all housekeepers. At intervals tallow had to be poured into molds, for a thrifty housewife was known by her stack of symmetrical candles. Spinning and carding had to be done

(the flax previously rotted, hackled and dressed), there were socks and mittens to be knitted; mending and dressmaking were also necessities. All this Charlotte achieved for her children with Christian serenity—her only solace, her devotion to them and to Eli. Him she served with patient loyalty until he died.

Life in Lansingburgh was rugged for the family as long as Eli lived. Food was the first necessity, the soil was lord and master of men. Their dependence upon it required hours of planning and then much hard work in order that each acre yield its utmost. Eli, eager to find some method or seed that would help him co-operate with Nature, wrote David:

The wheat you sent me enclosed in letters last spring I sowed the 24th of April, it grew and broadened well. A solid stalk, the longest beard, the whitest and most plump kernel and every way the handsomest looking wheat. I believe it superior in many respects to the common stock of spring wheat in our Country but the most material advantage would be the solidity of the stalk, it being judged by all to be impregnable to the Hessian fly. The wheat this year has been much injured by that insect and in some places the crop entirely cut off. I shall endeavor next year, if I live, to give out the seed and to interest others who will be particular to raise it—so much for agriculture.

To modern ears the cost of living in the early eighteen hundreds sounds delightfully low. To Eli, however, since he mentions it in a letter, the six dollars and seventy-five cents owed him by Mr. and Mrs. Smith, “the would be play actors,” seemed a fortune. Local bills went unpaid over long periods of time. The currency was involved; sometimes prices were in dollars, at other times in pounds, shillings and pence, as the following memorandum shows:

Bbl of beer	\$7.50
14½ lbs pork c .10 cts lb	12-1
9 lbs soap fat 5 cts	3-9
8¼ bushels ashes ½	9-11
½ of pew in brick church	60-0
Graining at sundry times	\$3.00
2½ lbs tallow	2-6
To 1 Walkins Dictiinary	7
1 Morse's Geography	3
Adv. horse 3 times	8
8 continuous ditto	13
Atlas to Morse's Geography	2-12
2 Testaments	8

Eli carried on with a brave heart but very little cash. He managed to have some fine clothes, as the oval miniature painted on ivory and mounted in gold, attests. The furniture of his inn was of cherry or pine and well fashioned. A tall clock made by Derby and imported from England ticked in the hall. Over the desk in the parlor hung a mirror in a gold leaf frame. Several of the stoves were handsome and his brother David admired the jugs and pretty glass bottles in the taproom. Eli could clearly recall the spacious and stately residence of his forbears in Stratford, built by his grandfather. At Fairfield, brother David had a charming home where he lived, for the times, in ease and great comfort.* It was natural for Eli to want all the things he wanted, but to come by them was a cruel struggle. By various means he managed to keep afloat, juggling the while with thin glass balls.

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Dr Brother,

I know I am too negligent about writing you,
but it seems most impossible for me to get a mo-

* A plaque marks this house.

ment retired to drop you a line. I keep no Bartender and much of the time of the time of late have had no hostler, and those I have had have been poor, so that although I do but little buisness that, and the repairs I have been engaged in for some time past have kept me very, uncommonly busy. I have but just got through the painting and other repairs. It has taken more time and cost much more than I expected, but it has added very much to the respectability of the place. I have had handsome new fences made in front and within, and that, and the house painted all over twice except the roof, and that ought to be shingled next spring. I have paid for painting since last September \$170.00—paying this and other repairs, and laying in my fall supplies prevented me from remitting you for Broom and samphire but I will do it with interest as soon as it is possibly convenient.

CHAPTER FOUR

David Judson of Fayrefield

By the year 1757, Stratford, Connecticut, had changed greatly from the rude village settled, in 1638, by twenty-five hardy immigrants from the Massachusetts Colony. The alchemy of growing wealth had transformed log cabins into two-story frame dwellings. These showed the English influence, yet remained as individual as New England Yankees. Many of them may be seen today, mute testimonials to the good taste, the flair for beauty buried beneath stern puritanical exteriors.

Such an one was erected by a David Judson, grandfather of another David. Here, with his wife, née Phoebe Stiles, he dispensed hospitality in the wilderness from "the only house in the neighborhood in 1723." Captain Judson himself was the architect and he achieved beauty as well as utility. The stones from the foundation of the original cabin, built by William, were used for the underpinning and for the mammoth chimney of this house.* There are fireplaces in

* This house is used by the Historical Society of Stratford and is open to the public.

six rooms, with brick ovens in two of these, four have handsome mantels. At the right of the front door is an elegant staircase, the bannisters hand-carved by slaves. There are two other stairways; the parlor and bedrooms are large and have fine paneling on the walls and in the doors.

In this house, Captain Judson's grandson, David, was born on August 11, 1757. Little could he guess that he was destined for heavier responsibilities than fall to the lot of the average oldest child. Fortunately for his family, this young David, as he grew up, proved to be eminently fitted to cope with any difficulties. His temperament was sanguine, his judgment cool and tempered, his decisions wise, his heart generous. In those days Duty and Family Loyalty were stressed. No trace of those severe pressures appears in David's liberalities. He gave graciously, supplied money plentifully, administered advice sparingly. He was indeed a prince among men.

But when some of us praised David's goodness Aunt Lela Judson MacGinnis would speak up in favor of his distant cousin, Adoniram, the most famous Judson. This cousin of David's possessed an inquiring mind linked to an intelligence of a most superior order. He went through Brown University, where at that time students were notoriously free thinkers. (They even took for nicknames those of Bible critics and detractors.) That Adoniram, Jr., might be affected by this wickedness was an anxiety to his father. Adoniram, Sr., was a Congregational minister and considered the age scandalous. In matters of opinion he was one to enforce rather than to persuade. This was characteristic of his day and his class, but it did not make life in the home any easier for his son. Brilliant and sensitive, the young Adoniram had an inflexible will also. The household was not one of peace.

He left college and taught school. After a year or two of that, the young man made a momentous decision. He would dismiss his pupils and travel far and wide through the northern colonies in the year 1808. Then on to New York

City where he would assume the name of Johnson. Here he almost shuddered in spite of his depravity, for he planned to join a theatrical company! He might find that playwriting and drama were his special talents. Until now they had been languages and mathematics—but you never knew! Later in life he was to say: “Not for worlds would I see a younger brother in the same situation.” Anyway, he had *his* fling.

From this sink of iniquity he turned away, and we soon find him one of the five members on the Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions. He was selected to go to London to confer with the London Missionary Society, and on the way he was captured by a French privateer and imprisoned at Bayonne.

In 1812 he and four others—Hall, Newell, Nott and Rice—were sent to Burma, where, after considerable wandering, Adoniram and his wife, Ann, settled in Rangoon. An indefatigable and tireless worker, Adoniram succeeded in thirty years in gradually rousing a sentiment in the East in favor of religious tolerance. He translated the Bible into Burmese and compiled an English-Burmese, Burmese-English dictionary. These works, intended primarily for missionaries, have been great aids to students and scholars of languages in the East. Adoniram’s missionary efforts and the publicity he received helped also increase the growing interest in Asia.

Numerous are that great man’s biographies. One of the best was written by Mrs. H. C. Conant, published in 1856, entitled, “The Earnest Man, or the Character and Labors of Adoniram Judson.” Mrs. Conant analyzed him with perspicacity, describing him with the delicacy and restraint of the Victorian Era. Quite rightly she marvelled at Adoniram’s power of endurance, after he reached Burma, because there, truly, the dangers and terrors of the early martyrs surrounded him and his saintly wife, Ann. “Both had the same heroic courage to face danger, the same fortitude to sustain that passive suffering which is the hardest trial to active spirits; both were animated by a ‘passion for souls’ stronger than life or death. But while his many-sided nature continually

presents new points of interest, we notice, now here, now there, a tendency to extremes, the very exuberance of spiritual vitality; in her we mark, as the prominent intellectual trait, a practical good sense, which guided her so truly in every emergency as to deserve a place far above what is commonly ranked as talent. The predominance of this trait in connection with her earnest moral purpose stamped upon her life such an impression of beautiful, we might say majestic, consistency that we cannot point to an act in her career with the wish that it might have been otherwise." Dr. Wayland, in his Memoir says, "Mrs. Judson was the author of those eloquent and forcible appeals to the government, which prepared them by degrees for submission to terms of peace, never expected by any who knew the hauteur and inflexible pride of the Burman court."

Ann's life was tragic, and at its end she died, young, in a strange land while Adoniram was far away. For in April, 1827, he was preaching at a new port at the mouth of the Selwen River. The East India Company, the Governor-General and the English crown had decided that this harbor would be an attractive acquisition. A commercial treaty was pending between the Burmese and the English and Adoniram hoped to have inserted an article on religious tolerance. Sanguine of its success he advised his wife and child to move into a new small settlement called Amherst. There a few converts had "built the first native houses that encroached on the native jungle, and disturbed the deer and wild fowl, who had been undisputed occupants of the peninsula." Here Captain Fenwick, civil superintendent of the place, vacated his house and made every effort to make this valiant, but lonely woman and her infant comfortable.

Adoniram, delayed by the slow processes of politics, was away at just this time for five months in Rangoon, where the news of Ann's death reached him. He left at once for Amherst and went to the home that had been Ann's for just three weeks before she fell ill. This is what he was told: "Her head was much affected during her last days and she

said but little. She sometimes complained thus: 'the teacher is long in coming; and the missionaries are long in coming; I must die alone and leave my little one; but as it is the will of God I acquiesce in his will. I am not afraid of death, but I am afraid I shall not be able to bear these pains. Tell the Teacher the disease was most violent and I could not write; tell him how I suffered and died; tell him all that you see; and take care of the house and things until he returns.' " The last day or two she lay almost senseless and motionless, on one side, her head reclining on her arm, her eyes closed; and at eight in the evening, with one exclamation of distress in the Burman language, she ceased to breathe.

Tribulations such as these first missionaries underwent were indeed desperate. No such awful perils had been the lot of the early American settlers, though threatened they had been by fear and famine. In Connecticut, by the late eighteenth century, the menace of a disgruntled Indian lurking in the nearby woods had all but disappeared. Yet when a child wandered off into the endless forest, who knew? The Village Green at times gave way to wider horizons and there was plenty to cause David concern. When he was twenty he and his five brothers and sisters were orphaned. Their parents died two years apart, the father first and then the mother. To raise and support this brood was no easy matter for David.

For a long time two of his brothers rested heavily upon his heart. There was Aaron, next to him in age, and Eli, the Benjamin of the tribe. Aaron and his bottles, Eli and his finances; Eli's troubles were material, Aaron's spiritual. It was late in his life before David could write to his niece Hannah, in Lansingburgh, "It gives me pleasure to inform you that your Uncle Aaron has become very temperate, not having taken the poison for nearly a year, nor, says he, has he now any inclination for it. He has seen the bad effect of rum & has noticed the dreadful evil crawling rapidly on

S.J.B. without any prospect of reform; for which reason he has or will alter his will and not give him the power of spending his estate; but will consider his children." So much for Aaron, who, in spite of his handicap, had acquired this world's goods, whereas Eli's lack of money was present and pressing up to the day of his death.

Eli was thirteen years David's junior. He turned to him whenever he needed help as flowers reach for the sun. Over a period of twenty years Eli borrowed from David nearly thirteen thousand dollars, which he seemed at no great pains to repay. Besides this substantial generosity David gave to the children of his youngest brother as much attention and consideration as though they had been his own. Five of Eli's eight offspring survived. They were, in order of age, Hannah, 1798-1839; Eliza, 1800-1879; David, 1810-1881; Aaron, 1812-1852; and Esther, 1817-1888. Wrote Uncle David: "I want to hear from all the family, together with all domestick concerns, pleasures and troubles, if any there are. If you are exempt, it is more than I can expect; but all events rightly improved, may be salutary to the soul and body . . . I want Hannah, if she is able, to sit down and scratch freely and tell me everything about the family, state of crops, state of religion and prospects, etc etc etc etc." To Eliza, "I hope your Ma keeps up good spirits and this doing will undoubtedly preserve health better than to brood over fearful evils which will never occur."

The letters do not say in what year David opened his General Store in Fairfield. The town was a meeting place, for the Court convened there, and its sessions attracted many of the men from the surrounding country. When he did set up in business he bought a stock of goods to please the townsfolk, and more practical merchandise for the farmers. He described himself, waggishly, as "Superintendent of pitchforks, rakes and scythes." Stratford was only 12 miles away, but roads were rough, winters severe and transportation slow. David yearned to be in constant communication with each one of his family. What better than to install a branch



A CONTEMPORARY PORTRAIT OF ELI JUDSON

of the United States Post Office on a counter, and to his other duties add that of Post Master?

This was then an honorable profession in which men of integrity were engaged. The urge for a postal service had small beginnings in 1639, when it can be said that it started. The Colonies were separated by vast distances; differences of politics and religion existed too; all their interests lay in the England they had left. How to get letters back and forth most easily? The Masters of the ships found an answer to this question. They would undertake for one penny per letter to deliver mail safely to some reputable tavern or coffee house where it might be called for. In certain coffee houses in London bags were placed to receive letters. For those who wished to use this ship letter plan the General Court of Massachusetts designated the house of Richard Fairbanks in Boston as "the place appointed for all letters which are brought from beyond the seas or are sent thither; they are to be brought unto him and hee is to take care that they be delivered or sent according to their directions and hee will also be allowed for every such letter one penny and must answer all miscarriages through his own neglect in this kind; provided that no man shall be compelled to bring his letter thither except hee please."

Gradually the Colonies became more interdependent. The Virginia Assembly early required that all letters "super-scribed for the service of his Majesty or publique shall be immediately conveyed from plantation to plantation to the place and person they are directed to under a penalty of one hogshead of tobacco for each default."

The first successful and permanent postal system was that of William Penn. As the population grew salaries increased. When Benjamin Franklin was appointed to be Deputy Postmaster for the Crown in Philadelphia he received one thousand pounds a year.

A curious fact is that at the beginning of the struggle for independence there were in America two rival systems, the British and the Constitutional. The latter came into being

because of the need for secret and independent means of communicating among leaders of the agitation against British control. Paul Revere was a post rider for Massachusetts Patriots as early as 1773, and his celebrated ride on April 18th, 1775, was taken in the performance of his postal duties.

The rates fluctuated. In 1799 single letters—that is, containing one piece—were charged eight to twenty-five cents, according to distance. In 1816 prices were set up which held until 1845. These were (also for one piece) 6 cents up to 30 miles; not over 80 miles, 10 cents; not over 150, 12½ cents; not over 400 miles, 18¾ cents; and beyond 400 miles, 25 cents. Postage was collected entirely in money, its prepayment being, in all cases, optional.

The earliest mail-franking privilege was granted to members of Congress and to private soldiers in service on November 8th, 1775. Martha Washington was given the privilege in 1800 “during her natural life.” It was a rare favor not lightly bestowed.

“My main object in doing the drudgery of the Post Office is to correspond with my friends,” David wrote. In 1816 he was sad, because “I fear our pleasure of correspondence for chit chat will be broken in a measure if the Rulers should deprive Postmasters the privelege of franking.” This was bad news for Eli, whose letters when folded, addressed and sealed with a wafer, proudly bore the word “FREE” in the upper right hand corner. This explains why their correspondence flourished in those frugal days, and why so many letters were exchanged with such alacrity.

David took unto himself a good wife, referred to always as Mrs. Judson. What was unusual for that period, they had only one child, whom they called Esther. She and Eli’s second daughter Eliza were the same age, the cousins had joyful times together. David loved this gentle niece, he spoke of her often as “dear Eliza.” When the girls were sixteen they attended the same Academy, doubtless with David’s help. He

writes to Eli: "Eliza has so much acquaintance or is so engaged in study that she does not write me though I requested her freely and frequently that I might communicate with and send hers to you . . . She wrote very pretty letters for a young girl and I am sorry she does not write weekly."

Because of their friendship, Eliza visited often at her Uncle David's. She found it a peaceful house, no strangers traipsing in and out, no bar-room noises. It was a tranquil home where a loving group was in complete accord. Too, there was less work to do there than at home, for David owned a young bond servant, twelve years of age. He had promised good treatment for her and an education of sorts until she reached eighteen. Although she earned more than her keep, which was nothing per annum, the cooking and baking were still done by Mrs. Judson, Esther or any visitor. The family enjoyed their leisure hours by paying informal calls or receiving them. Evenings would be devoted to useful sewing, needlework, or the samplers which every girl had to finish before she reached her teens. As the females sat at their embroidery frames the man of the house occasionally read to them or discussed the latest news. The women's minds were limited, of course, but words of one syllable would do it.

A party was a great event. Games usually for the young people, spiced with "post-office" or "pillow and keys." They were gay, they were eager, they were good, it was fun. At the end of the festivities, cider or apples or nuts or even tea with sugar in it were served. The two latter commodities were importations from the East and West Indies and were considered a rare treat. Another excitement was a trip to Stratford either by sleigh or wagon. In the latter the girls might perch on a maple wagon seat, kept for church use mostly. They shrieked and screamed delightedly when Uncle David, smiling to himself, picked out, purposely, a very rough spot in the rutty road. They chattered about the cousins they would see, and under their breath plotted a romp or a pillow fight.

When Eliza, rather ingenuously, wrote to Hannah of all these merry doings, her older sister was greatly envious. She visited her uncle occasionally, but not nearly as often as Eliza. She noticed that he never called *her* endearing names. Perhaps Hannah's health accounted for her reactions—and perhaps not.

In September, 1818, Eli wrote to his brother:

In case Mr. Ely had been going from this to Fayrefield we intended to have Hannah go with him for the purpose of making you a visit in the hope that it would be beneficial to her health. She is in a rather bad state of health, we do not know exactly what is the matter with her. She has lately spent three weeks at Ballston Spa to try the effects of the Waters, returned from there last week. It is doubtful whether she received any benefit from them but she is no worse and we hope some better.

At another time David recommended for Hannah, “a linament made of spirits and sweet oil as will mix. Esther don't consider that the linament is much good but that the application of blisters always relieved her.” On one of her visits to Fairfield Hannah added this postscript to a letter of her uncle's: “My neglect of writing to you is partly occasioned by the association and partly by my eyes being rather weak after riding in the stage and Aunt was fearful I might injure them if I strained them when they were weak. I spent a week at Mr. Glover's and they urged me to stay longer. I was treated with a great deal of politeness and was very agreeably entertained. You tell Julia, if she is at our house, that I cannot correspond with her unless we pay postage, as Uncle is not allowed to Frank any letter except he writes part of it himself. You must tell mama that I shall not starve here as long as I can get lobsters and long clams. I have got my temple [needlework?] most done and aunt appears very well pleased. Uncle keeps the town library and I calculate to read a great deal this summer. You must

give my love to the family and tell mama I am not . . .” Homesick, perhaps?

It is to be remembered that the nineteenth century was the heyday of frustrated females. Hannah had lost a lover at the tender age of sixteen—when a girl was then considered ripe for marriage. Late in the War of 1812 she had met an English colonel named Marjoribanks—pronounced Marchbanks—and they had fallen in love. He saw her practiced in all the household arts, clever with a needle, taking good care of her younger brothers and sisters. There was a good head on her shoulders. Her mind was keen, though tending to be over-active and neurotic. Her sharp provocative tongue may have enchanted the slower witted British officer. At any rate, they became engaged, so the story runs, then, suddenly he was ordered to return to England. He had every intention of coming back and claiming Hannah as his bride. He did sail again for America, but his ship was set upon by pirates and summarily sunk. He was not heard of again.

Never, alas! would Hannah have her own *Peel* or *Slice*—a universal gift of the day to a bride, bringing domestic utility and good luck to the new household. All her life long, her pies, cakes and loaves of bread would be removed from the oven with her Mother’s peel, not with her own. Therefore Hannah settled down to spinsterhood, and became the family’s chief reliance and helper. She molded candles efficiently, she darned beautifully, she made tallow from lamb’s fat; in season she helped to can and preserve. At spinning time her practiced foot pressed the treadle for a day that lasted from dawn till dark. She was expert at the various spinning wheels—for cotton, flax and wool demanded different sizes. The largest one was for wool. It, especially, required alert and flexible movements. The spinner, poised slightly forward, stepped swiftly back and forth, deftly winding her yarn on the spindle. A good day’s work for an active spinner was six skeins of yarn. To accomplish this it was estimated that she would walk over twenty miles!

Hannah, as a child, had received all the education that Eli could afford, and more. At the age of eight she was tutored in French and Algebra by Erastus Hawley, Jr., whose bill for \$2.90 covered seven weeks tutoring. Her copper-plate writing was so elegant that once Uncle David asked her to write less perfectly and to tell him more. Her schooling stopped at seventeen, but she was certainly much better educated than the average girl of her time. She possessed, too, a nice financial ability. Her father's constant improvidence must have vexed her sorely. After Eli's death she managed her mother's affairs so well that the numerous family was never destitute. She saw to her brothers' training and watched them become worthy citizens, Aaron a minister, David a wealthy merchant. Much credit she deserved, yet, it was ever "dear Eliza" with no word of affection for Hannah. The differences between the sisters are clearly revealed in the following letter:

Dear Brother and Sister

. . . I have deferred writing until this time and I am not sure that I should have undertaken it now had not the arrival of a letter to Mother reminded me that you are still unacquainted with the situation of David and Esther. About the middle of December Esther left us for Virginia having previously engaged herself as a private teacher, for a salary of \$400 a year, with board and washing. She has gone into the family of a Col. Dortch, who has one daughter, and will take from ten to fifteen girls to board with them and attend school. I have received a letter from her, since her settlement there. She appeared to be in fine spirits. Her room was a very pleasant one, a fine piano in it, plenty of fuel, and attendants in abundance.

David is at present in New Haven and I have received a long letter from him in which he gives a very particular description of a visit to Fairfield.

He was treated with the greatest kindness by all the relatives, and after spending ten days with them very pleasantly, was loaded down with gingerbread, figs, sausages, butter, sugar, crackers, sweet cake, in fact a trunk full of good things, his stage fare paid, and a promise of a fresh supply when these should be exhausted, he took his departure with feelings of much greater confidence in the good wishes of his friends than when he went amongst them. He says his advantages for improvement in N.H. are very great, but he thinks he shall not spend more than a year there. (He will visit us in May). My children are all in school except James—Eliza finished her basket last fall, and we think it a pretty article, but we do not know how it would compare with others as we have seen none but that.

Mr. Blake's health is very good but he has rather a lazy time, as the ice took a part of the dam off with it. This, together with the breach in the Canal has stopped his work there since the first of January, but he hopes soon to commence it again. Mother and Hannah wish to send a large share of love. Do let us hear from you oftener, and believe me your affectionate sister,

Eliza Blake.

Sister S. [Aaron's wife?]

Since Eliza commenced writing I returned from Cousin A. Buttons, where I have been for a day or two, the family are well and think much of their only daughter. Mary B is a very smart girl but hardly equal in loveliness to Eliza's youngest son about the same age. Esther is really living in the family of a methodist & I presume a slave holder but her employer, she says, appears to be a pattern of kindness—how will this sound to an abolitionist? Esther says she has the front parlor on the ground

floor—a colored woman comes into her room before she is up and makes her fire and prepares her washing apparatus & then awakes her and assists if required to dress Miss E. She then places wood in a porch adjoining the room and calls through the day to replenish her fire and see if she has any demands, Esther inquires if we do not fear she will become intolerably lazy. Mr Blake is waiting to mail the letter & the note I told them I would add. They fear the mail will be shut against them for this day.

Hannah

Eli's third surviving child was named David—after his uncle. Of him we shall learn more later. Last of the sons was Aaron. The correspondence gives the impression that he was the pet and favorite of them all. Eli wrote that he was “a rugged, hearty good boy at home, cared by his Mother.” In another letter, “cherished by his Mother.” Aaron was two years younger than David and apparently they were regular fellows, for their uncle David admonishes them to attend to their books and be nice boys. “Tell them,” he writes Eli, “that Uncle David sends his love to them and wishes to know whether either of them have disobeyed their Mother since he was there & if they did quarrel once, who struck first & whether they are loving now as their uncles David and Aaron were directly after some disagreement. Tell them we always shook hands in a minute, if one began to scold & so we loved each other since all the time.”

Little is recorded of the youngest of the family, Esther, save in the letter quoted above. Her education must have been a good one to have fitted her to go south and teach ten to fifteen girls at a reasonably good salary.

Uncle David had died of pneumonia in 1831 or this latest news of Eli's family would have made him very content. His store, the Post Office, the Town Library, had kept him closely at home, but his mind had ranged far afield. Mightily he cherished the frequent communications that ambled

slowly back and forth. Finally in the year 1817 he resigned his duties as Postmaster and lamented to Eli, "Sorry on your account principally, but as the confinement was great I do not regret it, so long as there has not been the least complaint . . . From Postmaster General I have had a handsome compliment for my correct accounts etc etc."* To this news Eli responded, "You say you have taken down your shelves but are not a broken merchant. Happy should I be if I could say, I had taken down my sign, & was able to live without keeping tavern or by any other buisiness."

To which David of Fayrefield answered, "Our best love awaits you and yours."

* One of his account books is in the Historical Society at Fairfield.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mynheer Vanderspegel's Fortune

It is said that every seven years a man's physical nature undergoes an alteration. Rightly enough, no such dictum exists in regard to characteristics. They change but little and have a tendency to remain static. One trait of Eli Judson's continued fixed throughout his life. His enthusiasms, so easily aroused, more than once worked him up to a point of gullibility. About the year 1800 his first love had been the Erie Canal. In 1807 the newly devised uses for steam gave him his next thrill. These two had fairly sound bases, but in 1814 on a fine May morning, a new excitement, with less substantiability, appeared right at the door of his Inn.

A very elegant foreigner, a Dutchman, rode up. He had imposing luggage, a commanding presence and he asked to be shown to the finest guest room. Eli, outwardly unperturbed, preceded him to the second story, begging indulgence for the low ceilings and the size of the bedrooms. Like most of those of the period, they were tiny, but the cherry bed, bureau, washstand and Windsor chairs were unusually good for an Inn. Mynheer Vanderspegel condescended to move in.

He settled down in the Tavern for several weeks. In the

taproom evenings, drinks went round at his expense, while he regaled the customers with an amazing story. He was, said he, a descendant in the fourth generation of one named Bedlow, and Bedlow had been a Governor of Batavia. (Batavia, where the devil is that? asked the yokels, and gaped at the impressive atlas which Eli produced.) Mynheer flourished impressive documents, loaded with seals, which purported to show that his ancestor had deposited with, or paid money to, the Dutch Government at home for safekeeping. It was his intention to claim this fortune, now swollen with interest to great size. And how, he asked them, should he go about it?

This was a weighty matter, so Eli wrote at once to Brother David, for it was a privilege, Eli felt, to help his grand new friend. So on a mild June evening, the 24th in the year 1814, to be exact, David talked the Vanderspegel troubles over with Mr. Isaac Ely of New York, who was in Fairfield at the moment. Mr. Ely was not impressed; in fact he thought "the buisiness not worthy of further inquiry & best to give it up." David, however, recalled a Dutch gentleman who had lived in Bridgeport who might be "willing and able to do the needful." He was "a good and friendly man," and although he and David were not acquainted, David was properly introduced by Mr. R. M. Sherman, a mutual friend. Mr. Sherman, in his note, referred to David as "a respectable inhabitant of this village," and signed himself, "Very Respectfully" to the Honorable R. C. Van Polanen. Mynheer Van Polanen, by a strange coincidence, had himself been a Governor of Batavia and Consul to several nations. "He removed from Holland on account of the troubles & will in the fall of the year return to dwell in Holland."

On the 27th of June David was received by Van Polanen with the utmost cordiality, and Eli's letter was read to him. Previous to this he had perused Vanderspegel's official papers and a Tontine insurance policy held by him. Mr. Polanen observed that it was possibly true, but he had his doubts about the business. "He said he had a list of all

the Governors that had ever ruled at Batavia & that he was very certain that no person by the name of Bedlow had ever been the Governor—at least, that name was not included in his list, which was correct. There might be some mistake as to place, for Batavia was very large & he might formerly have been some kind of ruler in some part of the Country. If the deposit were true and the money paid according to the signature, he doubts not the honor—the good faith—or the ability of his nation to pay. The great difficulty would be to prove the descent, for ample proof must be presented.”

Mynheer Van Polanen recommended that Vanderspegel, “a very respectable name in Holland,” procure his baptismal certificate, “for it is highly probable that the family who had so much money in anticipation would safely keep proper records of their families in order that the fourth generation obtain the boon . . . if Vanderspegel were very rich he would not mind a little expense and trouble when the object is so very great.” David gave his opinion by adding, “I think, too, that Vanderspegel ought to go forward and show his proof, otherwise a man of sense will say to you—you may as well look for a needle in a hay mow.”

There are no further letters on this subject. A deep dark silence shrouds Mynheer Vanderspegel’s success or failure.

CHAPTER SIX

The Mania for Land

As we look back on the last of the eighteenth and the beginnings of the nineteenth century, they appear to have been filled with many excitements, the greatest of which, in this country, was land speculation. Eli Judson, true to his nature, was not to be immune to this national craze. His able mind enjoyed the abstract as well as the concrete, and here was a delicious combination of the two. In 1814, soon after the Vanderspiegel matter was dismissed, he began to wonder about some claims held by his brother David. These were located in western New York State, in the then famous Genesee Land Company. Eli thought that a trip on horseback to the country around the little new town of Rochester might gain a pretty penny for David. Incidentally, he, Eli, would relish the journey and see the world. But before following him on this latest adventure, it is necessary (and not too painful) to learn something about the early real estate market in these our United States.

From the very start, in this country, the story of the "wild lands" is one of frantic speculation. The finding of this continent was, in itself, a gamble. Columbus might discover

it or pass it by. The Kings of Spain, Portugal, France or England might acquire enormous wealth from it or they might go bankrupt. The dice, however, were loaded. By the sixteenth century both of the Americas were boldly placed on maps surrounded by dragons, griffins, stars and blowing cherubs.

During the first hundred years of our colonization, land was boundless and easy to come by. So vast seemed the New England coast to the frugal Pilgrim Fathers that never could they have dreamed the forest would break down eventually into townships, and then into building lots. When the settlers turned into ardent purchasers, the Indians were pleased to sell. Joseph Judson, in Stratford, son of the original William, took advantage of a sellers' market and acquired five thousand acres. The colonists called this tract "Monhegan Hills." The deed, conveniently written by the new owners, read: "To my loving friends Ensign Joseph Judson, and Joseph Hawley and John Minor of Stratford" . . . but no price was mentioned. In a short time property began to increase rapidly in value. In 1660 one shrewd Indian Chief had to be paid as much as twelve English pounds' worth of trading cloth and a blanket for various brooks, rivers and meadows of fertile soil. Musquatt, another hard bargainer, obtained ten coats, five pounds of powder and twenty pounds of lead to be paid "by ye first of October next ensuing." The Indians were learning. Now the aborigines could not sell their camping grounds fast enough; they disposed of huge tracts joyfully. What were a few hundred square miles to them? What fun, the natives must have thought, to sell something that had cost them nothing, order the squaws to pack up, and move ever onward toward the setting sun!

But white men, whether in the north or the south, were also turning their eyes to the west. Whether they owned limitless estates or possessed only a few hundred acres, they sought yet more land and more. It went for 50 or 75 cents an acre, and they set out to get what they wanted. They were a wild, boisterous, sharp-witted and optimistic crew. Lord

Dunsmore, the distracted Governor of Virginia, referred to this inland penetration, in a letter he wrote to England: "I have learnt from experience that the established authority of any government in America and the policy at home are both insufficient to restrain the americans. They do and will remove as their avidity and restlessness incite them. They acquire no attachment to a place but wandering seems engrafted in their nature and it is a weakness incident to it that they should forever imagine that the lands further off are still better than those upon which they are already settled."

Among these restive people who disturbed the Rulers were Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Ethan Allen and the father of Thomas Jefferson. They bought into such speculative enterprises as the Ohio Land Company and the Mississippi Company.* But the Revolution suspended the rising mania for a time. During the war years the bulk of permanent wealth was invested largely in ships. Since many of these were sunk, land, still available in quantity, became negotiable and was used for cash. Hostilities over, a boom of unsuspected proportions started, with the western part of New York State especially attractive to the far-sighted gamblers.

The early history of the Empire State is a curious one. Prior to the Revolution, New York consisted of a narrow strip only one hundred miles in width, on either side of the Hudson River. For years an altercation went on between Connecticut and Massachusetts Colonies as to which owned what part of the lands west of this thin slice. Congress finally settled the squabbles by giving the two colonies different parcels of land, which, much later, were turned back to form the present boundaries of New York. After the war, Massachusetts, as well as the other colonies, was bankrupt. Astute men saw in this an advantage to themselves. Oliver Phelps,

* The Ohio Land Office in Marietta was the oldest building of its kind in the Northwest territory. It was erected in 1788.

citizen of Hartford, offered to buy six million of these western lands for a million dollars, and the poverty-stricken Assembly seized the golden opportunity. This enormous grant only partially quenched Phelps's appetite for land. With a partner, Gorham, he purchased in "The Great American Wilderness"—another trifle of two million six hundred thousand acres—from the Mohawk Indians.* Of this tribe it was reported that "their eloquence was bold, nervous and animated"; that "they possessed heroic fortitude and were of an unstained probity."

This tribute was in sharp contrast to the standards of some of the traders who found the new sport as good as, or better than, horse trading; but the story of the making of treaties between the United States and the Indians is a "sorry and discreditable tale." A fellow with very little cash could take a chance and buy westward to the Southern seas or to any other point of the compass. The sky was the limit, literally.

The most blatant case, perhaps, was that of John Cleves Symmes, whose collection of letters to his friend and political adviser, Jonathan Dayton in Washington, D. C., is the most vivid available description of the ways and means of pushing the red men back. Dayton held some 250,000 acres between the Big and Little Miami in Ohio, so was interested in a projected canal around Ohio Falls. He was a college graduate, at 27 the youngest signer of the Constitution, and Speaker of the House in the Fifth Congress. He could help Symmes very materially. The first Federal Land Pre-emption Act in 1801 had to do with settlers in the Symmes Tract along the Miami River. They received preference over persons desiring to purchase and hold for investment or speculation. Dayton, Ohio, was named after Jonathan. In a letter to him Symmes brazenly describes a transaction in faraway Indiana as follows:

* Five million acres were by no means unusual for a group or even for a single man.

The Chief (others sitting around him) wished to be informed how far I was supported by the United States and whether the thirteen fires had sent me hither. I answered them in the affirmative; and spread before them the thirteen stripes which I had in a flag in my camp. I pointed to the troops in their Uniforms [then on parade], & informed the chief, that those were the warriors which the thirteen fires kept in constant pay to avenge their quarrel; and that the U.S. were desirous of peace with them; and to demonstrate this, I showed them the seal of my commission, on which the american arms are impressed; Observing that while the Eagle held a branch of a tree as an emblem of peace in one claw; she had strong and sharp arrows in the other; which denoted her power to punish her enemies. The Chief, who observed the device on the seal with great attention, replied by the interpreter, "That he could not perceive any intimations of peace from the attitude the Eagle was in; having her wings spread as if in flight; when folding of the wings denoted rest and peace. That he could not understand how the branch of a tree could be considered as a pacific emblem, for rods designed for correction were always taken from the boughs of trees. That to him the Eagle appeared from her bearing a large whip in one claw, and such a number of arrows in the other, and in full career of flight, to be wholly bent on war and mischief."

As a consequence of such shady methods, litigation was incessant, claims and titles to land were constantly in dispute. The legislature at Albany, New York, was snowed under and lawyers reaped a rich harvest. One of the suits that plagued the Assembly for years was entered by a group of prominent men from Hudson, New York. John Livingston, Robert Troup, Peter Schuyler and others believed that they

had leased a sizeable grant from the Indians of the Mohawk Valley for 999 years, at an annual rental of two thousand Spanish dollars. They insisted that their arrangements antedated, by two months, the sale to Oliver Phelps by Massachusetts. They would not be downed. They did their utmost in the matter until in 1793 the session, in an effort to be rid of them, offered them certain lands to the northwest of the State, called the "Old Military Tract." These were the lands which the State had set aside for the payment of military bounties to soldiers of the State who served in the Revolution. One million, six hundred thousand acres lay between Lake Ontario and the Seneca Lakes. There is no record that this was ever accepted by the group, or that a deed was given.

Oliver Phelps, operating boldly, ignored all prior claims, moved to Canandaigua and there established, in 1789, the first private land office in what was then the United States. He little knew that the saying, "doing a land-office business," would become a fixture in American English. He hired supersalesmen who made a practice of traveling on stage coaches, and who drew flowery pictures to enthuse the passengers. They persuaded open-mouthed yokels in taprooms, they rode about the countryside, peddling more acres to overworked farmers. To promote sales further, a terrific barrage of leaflets inundated the towns and cities. They were even mailed to good prospects in Europe.

In some cases the land offices did not give clear titles or deeds, nor did they necessarily sell parcels of land outright. They marketed merely scrip, warrants, or shares, which represented only a vague claim to a definite acreage. Shares were the least valuable—an assurance of nothing in particular—though they had a face value in currency. Have we here the beginnings of stock corporation in America, and Wall Street trading?

At first, settlers were slow to come, for the lot of the early pioneer was hard. They were poor, and had to have credit; they struggled against the wilderness, the savages, and rattle-

snakes; they built roads, they paid taxes, cleared streams, lacked schools and churches. Families had to be maintained against starvation and protected from disease. Although they might be attacked by ague, although they might be dispirited, they must ever hope and never despair. They worked stoutly and prospered cautiously.

The results of this determination and thrift were apparent by 1810 when Theodore Dwight, President of Yale College, wrote, after a trip to western New York: "It is questionable whether mankind has ever seen so large a tract changed so suddenly from a wilderness into a well-inhabited and well-cultivated country."

Reports like this one, and many others, kindled Eli Judson's imagination. His proposed trip echoed back to the Genesee Land Company with all its claims and doubts. It was worth a try, but as he had no money for the jaunt, he sat him down and wrote to Brother David in "Fayrefield."

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Tour

Between the years 1810 and 1817, Eli and David Judson had corresponded intermittently in regard to the Genesee Lands and the deeds in question. David's judgments were always well considered and sober, he believed fully in the validity of his claims. He was ready to send his brother as agent to investigate them, for he preferred Eli to Mr. Joseph Hawley of the Oliver Phelps Land Office in Canandaigua. Hawley had offered to act for David upon receiving a power of attorney. The Connecticut storekeeper was prudent. He thought he might be a Yankee of not much honor . . . "and in this case a delay may give him an opportunity to view the land and if *good*, hold us to our word and if *bad* he may pretend that the war prospect will excuse his compliance. You are fully competent," he told Eli, "of managing the business and I well know will do the very best you can—and therefore I authorize you to act in my stead and as my agent in selling the land. Myself not very well so excuse the scroll."

In the late spring of 1817 plans became definite. In the first days of July David forwarded to Eli two letters, each

of which contained one hundred dollars. This money was to be used by Eli for his trip to the western lands.

On the 8th of July David wrote to ask whether the money had arrived safely. He also inquired how his youngest brother could leave his family concerns for so long a time.

In the good old days there were plenty of slaves, indentured bond servants, and apprentices, at hand, as well as free labor . . . These four classifications of labor in colonial times were borrowed from elsewhere, usually western Europe. There was a fine distinction between apprentices and bond servants. Apprentices, frequently, were taught trades. The girls learned to spin or knit and other manner of housewifery. They were instructed in the art of making "Mantos, Pettycoats, to sew and Marke plain Worke." Children and youths were bound to masters by an arrangement which in a shop or home combined work with education. In later years the modern factory production compelled them to be employed where there was work but no education or training for life.

Indenture servitude was a colonial modification of the English practice of binding out the poor and unemployed. Destitute persons, or those who wanted to conserve their funds, agreed to labor in the Colonies in return for passage to America. The term was usually four to seven years, but even so the price rose from 13 pounds in 1697 to 22 pounds in 1760. After the Revolution this custom declined somewhat. Many of these bond servants had harsh masters and ran away from them. No redress was to be had by the servant as long as the master or mistress did not disfigure or maim him or her. Forty shillings was the usual reward offered for a runaway:

Forty shillings. For taking up and securing Mary Brown, alias Edwards, Pennsylvania born indented Servant, who ran away from the Service of the Subscriber, her Master, a few Days ago: She is a so-so-sort of a looking Woman, liable to Clumsiness,

much Pock pitted, which gives her an hard Favour and a frosty look, wants several of her teeth, speaks good English and Dutch. About 26 or 28 years old, perhaps 30. Had on or about her when she went off a red quilted Pettycoat, a cross barr'd brown and white Josey, a sorry red Cloak and the making of a new stuff Wrappe. Supposed to be gone towards Philadelphia via New York. James Crofton, Albany.

Nancy Perron, though more attractive, was worth no bigger reward:

Fresh colored with black curled hair, is thick and well set, round faced and looks very impudent; had on when she went away, a striped Homespun Gown and a blue and white apron.

Instead of an "impudent" look, it was more often described as a "down look." When servants ran away they often disappeared for good. The taproom boys were particularly undependable. Charlotte, and whatever help was in the Tavern at the moment, would have to run it, although both Hannah and Eliza would do their best to assist their mother. They assured Uncle David of this in pretty letters. He answered, gaily, that he was glad "they were disposed & *determined* to manage all their domestic matters in such a manner as shall recommend them to the best man breathing for a husband in due time." In 1817 little David was seven, Aaron but four, Esther would be born on November 25th. David might well inquire into Eli's domestic affairs, about which he, Eli, showed little, or debonair, concern.

By the 20th of July, Eli was ready and departed happily on horseback. He rode as far west as Buffalo, then returned to Canandaigua where Mr. Smedley and Mr. Hawley lived. To both these gentlemen Eli had letters of introduction from David. On August 16th, Eli reported, in ink of poor quality,

that his "tour" had been fatiguing, through rain, mud, woods and plenty of mosquitoes to boot.

He put up at a tavern, but Mr. Smedley hospitably insisted that Eli make his house his home. Even the horse was taken into his keeping, "So that I am billeted out free of cost, except oats for my horse of which I had none . . . Great crops through the whole Country I have travelled through but a bad time to get hay and grain—some grown in the fields but not much—some smutty wheat in some places—this is a fine day for harvesting and the farmers are busy improving it—they are now in the midst of their harvest here."

Toward the last of August Eli reached home and at once he started the first of five letters to David which tell of his trip in serial form. They were written one a day in some detail.

Lansingburgh, Sep. 1st, 1817

Dear Brother,

It is with no common sensations that I am again enabled to write you from home.

After banging about thirty nine days—a distance in all of more than a thousand miles, in an uncommon wet season, and some part of the time in unfrequented roads, not being used to travelling and suffering fatigue and privations, I was not accustomed to, I have reason to be thankful that my health has been preserved. Four of my neighbors who started a week before I did and have made a similar tour are now all of them on beds of sickness, the Lake or Tipus fever, one will probably not live this day through. They were all strong constitution hearty Men, had purchased land in the neighborhood of Sandusky, at \$5 per acre with the intention of remaining there. It is supposed they took the fever from the stagnant waters at the mouths of the Rivers that empty into Lake Erie.

One of them bought land with a view of settling there, at the worst place where not a drop of water may be got, being induced by the fertility of the soil.* I should think it a very inconsiderate act. For my part I have as yet experienced no other inconvenience from my journey than a troublesome bile, owing probably to setting and riding so much; as soon as I get so as to ride I shall go to Albany and pay up the taxes on Genesee Land. It was a satisfaction to find my family in health tho my business had suffered in my absence as might be expected more or less. The Young Man I left as Barkeeper, my Wife was obliged to dismiss in two weeks after I was gone, which brought a three fold charge on her.

I am as usual Sr

E Judson

The investigation which Eli had undertaken was not an easy one. Deeds for land were frequently duplicated by different offices either in error or on purpose. Modes of communication were difficult and the War of 1812 further complicated any search:

I did not get the papers I went after into Canida—the family who had them lives on the road leading from the head of Lake Ontario to Detroit, it was the Theatre of War in our last contest with Great Britain, and this country occasionally in the power of each Nation but at a time when our troops were in the possession of Detroit, Sandwich, etc. and this man Moses Brigham was issuing Commissary to the passing British troops—a Party of Canadian Refugees, his old neighbors came from Detroit and plundered his home of everything in it,

* This land is still among the most fertile of the Midwest.

destroying what was of use to them of Papers etc. not leaving the family a second shift of clothes, took the man off prisoner to Detroit, where from the fatigues and hard treatment he underwent, he generated disease, of which, just before the close of the War he died. The family knew nothing of the papers I was after, but if they were in his possession they suppose they must have been destroyed with his other papers.

As a further necessary step to learn about the "Lotts," Eli paid twelve shillings to have a map made of the district surrounding Canandaigua. One of the clerks copied it from the Oliver Phelps Land Office Book. Eli studied it and reported:

This township was sold by Oliver Phelps soon after his purchase to a number of Persons in and about Lenox in Massachusetts at a shilling an acre. It was by them surveyed and lotted and each man drew the lotts his name is marked on. O. Phelps bought back the rights of several, hence you see the name of O.P. on many of the lotts. (Large lotts were $52\frac{1}{2}$ acres, small ones were 32 acres.) The settlement of this Township, did not for some cause, keep pace with the Country generally 'till within a few years. The laying out and rapid improvements of the Villages Rochester and Carthage, has a great influence on the value of the adjacent Land, it's bringing a market as it were to their doors. Rochester is both sides of the River (good bridge over the River) and is perhaps the most rapid growth of a Village for the time being, that ever was known in the United States, there being 70 buildings erected the first summer two years ago, and 100 buildings last summer, and generally speaking good buildings. Besides the great capitols

employed in trade, there is immense sums expending in digging Millraces and Canalls through solid rock for a Mile in length and intended hereafter to be continued past all the falls which is three miles, to connect the navigation of the River above with Lake Ontario. The River is navigable 30 or 40, some say 50 miles. The Grand Erie Canal is intended to pass through this town and cross the river above the falls at the spot where this Canal is taken out of it.

Carthage is $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles below Rochester at the head of Navigation from the Lake on the East side of the River. I did not see it. It was commenced last summer and is said to be growing full as fast as Rochester, and having heavy capitolists engaged on it.

Eli followed up this general survey by examining the lots which he believed were rightfully David's. He went on "the principal of attacking our Enemy in his weakest point first and preventing any combinations among the occupants, if any there should be." Mr. Smedley went with him and on lot number six they found a situation that evidently was typical.

On the whole the quality of this lot of $52\frac{1}{2}$ acres was much better than we expected. We found a part of it, say 4 or 5 acres, ploughed for a crop of wheat—it appears that some 10 or 12 years ago, an old hunter took possession of the lot, cleared a small piece, which he mowed, stuck up a log hut and resided, being in a secluded place on the borders of the bay, following his occupation of hunting, 'till about three years ago. Inhabitants getting near round him—whom such people can no more bear approach of than a Beaver can, he sold out his possession to a farmer living within a mile of it

for 15 dollars. This man was in hopes that no owner would ever appear, but enlarged the clearing to 5 acres and together with the old hunter's Meadow ploughed it ready for wheat, but had not yet made the fence.

We looked up the man who went in the lot with us to show us the lines, etc. he said he should like now that he had gone so far to save it but he must do as I said—he wanted to buy it, offered five dollars an acre for it payable in wheat etc in Rochester at the market price as soon as he could raise enough. On my refusing the offer he asked what I would take—being previously determined not to offer any of it for sale, fearing I might by some, be looked upon as a speculating adventurer looking up land to which I had no just title—I told him I did not wish to sell at any price it would then fetch, that I was convinced the rapid growth of the Neighboring Villages would cause the rise of the land in their vicinity to be very rapid, it being about an equal distance from Rochester & Carthage, say $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles, that the advantage farmers would have being so near market would have such a sensible effect on the land round that it was better to hold it, than sell it. We finally agreed on terms, and being prepared with pen, ink and paper, I laid my memorandum book on a stump out on the lot, and on it, wrote a lease, a copy of which I enclose.

The next day, Mr. Smedley, who was on the staff of the Phelps Land Office, and Eli rode out to lot number 27 on which they found a clever old man by the name of Cook. He professed much joy at seeing Eli and hoped he would be amenable and favorably inclined. This lot was a choice one, it had been divided into suitably sized fields, fenced, and had good crops of wheat, rye, corn, oats and buckwheat. There were two log houses on a rise of ground about a

dozen rods from the river, a gentle slope to the water, young apple trees, the heaviest of the wood yet standing. The Cooks—father and two hearty rugged sons—had been on this land for four years, thru some error, but as they had made improvements before it was discovered, he concluded to stick by it. Now what was to be done?

He wanted to buy it at about what it would have sold for when he went on to it . . . asked me if I would take 12 dollars per acre. I was previously told by Mr. Hawley that it would not do to sell to him for he would want it below its value and would be forever paying for it. The best way of satisfying him would be to give him a lease for such a term as would satisfy him for clearing the land.

Smedley asked the Old Man's son, a man of 25 years, while he, the old man and I was going over the fields, what he would take for it. He said he would not look at \$25 dls. pr acre. Smedley says it would sell for \$30 but I think that is overrated at present, tho it will command a good price and short pay at any time. The Old Man plead his hard case and I feeling the importance of getting possession, thereby securing the title and also wishing to leave him satisfied, I gave up a point and agreed to pay the back Taxes. Thus was peaceable and quiet possession attained of this lot and to the entire satisfaction of the possessor.

When they finished this business it was near night so they went out of their way three miles and stayed at "a Miserable tavern 'till next morning." They then approached two more lots where they expected to meet with some difficulties. On lot number 40 they found a Mr. Stevens in a poor log hut, fences in disrepair and such shiftless improvements generally that "a suspicion has become prevalent that the

man who had previously possessed it had no title to it." Eli wrote:

There is nothing, perhaps, that will strike so much terror in a man who has made an honest purchase of a farm as to have another come and challenge his title to it. After much talk, Stevens proposed to consult a neighbor of his who lives on lot 24 a kind of intelligent as well as upright man among them, had been Assessor etc. We accordingly went there—his name is Morse. After opening the subject he asked if I had any claim on the adjoining lot number 32. I told him I had, that two of the lotts I had already got settled and had now come to see to these. Well, said he, the neighbors here & I have for a long time been fully of the opinion that from some quarter, there would some time or another appear a different owner to those lots, for said he, occupants did not act as if they owned the property.

After setting awhile Mr. Smedley asked me to let him see my Deed. He took it and looked at it awhile, then Mr. Morse took it, and after looking at it sufficiently, he handed it to another of his neighbors, saying, there, that explains the Develish jockeying there has been about these lots for a number of years past and he advised the man to take a lease. I mention these circumstances to show that all have the fullest confidence in the justice and honesty of my title.

Mr. Smedley then proposed that he and Eli should return without going to interview the settlers on lot number 32. He pointed out, in front of Mr. Morse, that they were not likely to do anything with them if they did—it would be best to return to Canandaigua and send to them another

way. "This, however, was all finesse," writes Eli, the emissary. Upon hearing this, Mr. Morse urged them to go so that the matters might be settled and costs avoided. So after making their adieux they reluctantly departed. "It was more of an object to get these occupants to take leases than any other lot, for it was a most Valuable lot, and the tenants held the only opposite claim. A great deal of talking and a long time was necessary. I told them—"

Letter number 4 ended on this suspense and David was obliged to wait twenty-four hours or longer for number 5, which was dated the next day:

I told them that I was not disposed to take advantage of any of them that had come into possession ignorant of the true situation of the lands, that if it should be amicably settled, I would be very favorable toward them. That if they were of a mind to take leases, I would give them such a length of time as would pay them for the improvements, but the land and its rise, I must have, and if I was obliged to get it by law I should of course take all the law would give me.

The Principal of the three settlers, Brasted, was much troubled, did not know what to do, had exchanged a valuable farm for that, and if he now lost that it would ruin him, he begged we would stay 'till next morning and let him think of it, we did so. He then proposed that I wait while he go see Rogers and try to swap back again, and if he could not do this, he would immediately come and take a lease of Smedley if I would leave one with him. Not being able to bring the buisness to a close now, and not wishing to be thought severe and hasty, or showing any concern about the final result of it; I agreed to wait, the time talked of for the lease was two years. It is not believed he will do

anything with Rogers, for he is allowed to be a great Rogue, and it is supposed he knew his title was not good.

Old Mr Rogers [the Rogue's father apparently], who is represented to be a clever honest old man, wanted to wait and see what Brasted did, but on being told by his neighbors of the risk he ran to lose the use of all his improvements, and a heavy bill of cost with it, he finally said, after we had got on our horses to come away, that if I would make out a lease for three Years and leave it with Smedley, he would call there in a few days and sign it. Oh, says Smedley, it is a hard case for the Old Man give him three years; so I agreed to it, and would much rather have stopped then and wrote the lease, but not wishing to show so much anxiety before the neighbors who were all full in the belief of the justice of my title, and wanting to go to work at their harvesting, I left it on the verbal agreement. In Canandaigua a Man who was one of the purchasers saw, and knew me, and said before Smedley, there is Judson I suppose he has come to see about his land, I bid off some of it, I wish he had neglected it awhile longer. Smedley told him he need not be under apprehension of having to take the land, so it seems he knew who owned. He was a young man from Albany, now in a land Office there.

All of which is submitted to your patience—

E. Judson

CHAPTER EIGHT

Eli Judson Dies

Just where and how Eli Judson of Lansingburgh met Charlotte Ranney, of Middletown, Conecticut, is unknown, but meet they did and fell in love. She was a simple, good soul and it thrilled her to the depths of her nature when Eli, in his ripe mellow voice, disclosed to her his ambitions. He told her of plans to leave off tailoring, and of how, together, they would make a glorious success of the Inn. In the spring of 1797, April to be exact, Charlotte learned that a mortgage was cancelled, recorded and accepted by John Van Rensselaer. This sounded wonderful to her, so, "for better, for worse," she married Eli on December 30th of the same year.

Eli fully appreciated the sterling worth of his dependable wife. As he would have put it, however, he would not want her to worry over financial details, so she did not largely share the knowledge of his affairs. Hannah, the eldest daughter, as she grew up, had a horrid curiosity, though. Her questions must have been a thorn in the flesh, at times. She could have asked about a mortgage for \$2600 taken out by Simeon Johnson, her father's partner; there was a note to her Uncle Aaron, at Stratford, and, most haunting of all,

a loan from Uncle David of seven thousand dollars. Eli fully intended to repay this last large obligation by 1806, but as late as 1805 not even a penny of interest had been sent to Fairfield.

Very occasionally there would be some spare cash on hand and this money would be sent to England for safe keeping. Accounts, receipts, and balances were reported from London in exquisite copperplate handwriting by John Todhunter. Money, so hard to acquire in the Colonies, sought safety still in the erstwhile Mother Country. There were, as yet, no trustworthy banks in America and the Bank of England was the Americans' financial Rock of Gibraltar.

So Eli turned his back on his debts, and proceeded to feed, clothe, and educate his family. Fortunately his health over the years was rugged, save in one respect—he suffered frequently from heavy colds. During these attacks he remembered his God and begged Him to spare him, Eli, longer to his wife and children. On one such occasion David wrote to him:

My Dear Brother,

I duly received your two letters or rather Miss Hannah's and with you give all praise to a Merciful God that he has thus far, in mercy to your dear family, spared your life in this sickness. I hope & pray this visitation may be abundantly sanctified to you and yours for our everlasting good. These are only short reprieves from death, and a kind admonition to be prepared to meet our Judge. I hope you have and will take the very best advice and be able to announce to me that you have had no relapse and are still on the recovery.

I send you inclosed Mr Todhunter's letter and have credited you the balance. It is possible and I hope probable that a further payment may be realized and that you may live to see this business closed, and be continued a useful member to your

family & the world for a long time to come; but we must not calculate on long life, nor procrastinate one day. It is a great blessing to have a good wife for a nurse & daughters willing to do according to their ability. A good Mr Blackford also and many other anxious neighbors. I realize their feelings for you and comfort myself with the idea that you have many interested friends who will do all in their power for your relief and comfort.

Best love to Sister and the Children—with anxious expectation of another letter.

D. Judson

From the less serious indispositions Eli made good recoveries, but in the summer of 1821 a condition of the lungs developed, which would not yield to “*epacac* and swets.” Despite faithful Charlotte’s ministrations, notwithstanding the constant care of Hannah and Eliza, Eli died on the 30th of September at the age of fifty-one. To paraphrase an Irish friend, indeed he was a great-hearted man, for he left Charlotte and his five children all of Lansingburgh and Troy to make their living in.

When the news reached Fayrefield, David and his wife, filled with loving concern, left at once for Lansingburgh with all the ready cash they could collect. They found Eli’s relict and offspring, “destitute of comforts.” Upon their return home David wrote to Hannah that they wished “it had been convenient to leave a larger sum.”

Later it was no surprise to Hannah to find that her father’s estate consisted mainly of debts, obligations, and liabilities. Among the bills was one from the doctor which read:

5 months care of Mr Judson in his	
last illness	\$47.45
Cannamon and mace, extract of lemon,	
cod liver oil, medecine and attention	
to Child	63 cts.

The Inn was the largest asset that could be salvaged to satisfy the creditors' clamor—and such of its contents which were beyond the family's needs. Charlotte and Hannah sensibly decided to sell the superfluous, rent the big house, the stable, and the outbuildings, and move to a smaller place where they could take boarders. Mr. Dana, a school teacher, who had been with them a long time, wished to go along with them, and he persuaded others to come.

So began the sad business of breaking up their home of many years. On the 22nd of November, 1821, Fitch Skinner swore and declared that he would "truly, honestly and impartially appraise the personal property of Eli Judson, deceased, according to his best knowledge and ability." John Taylor swore likewise.

The Inn had been comfortably furnished. The inventory lists 14 beds, 62 chairs, 6 benches, 26 tables, 8 bureaus, 11 looking-glasses, whale oil lamps, and a kitchen and barroom fitted out in the best early American style. Some of the appraisals follow:

14 Windsor chairs	\$7.50
1 Dining table	4.00
2 end tables	3.00
1 pine table	.37½ cts
2 Buffalo skins	4.00
1 Chest	.20
1 lot of vials and bottles in the bar	.25
1 Clock & Case	10.00
[Probably a grandfather clock still in the family. Made by Derby in England in 1770 with moon, days of the month on the face, etc. The case is Chippendale.]	
1 warming pan	1.00
2 copper tea kettles	3.00
2 beds, bedding and bedstead	35.00
50 blankets	75.00
1 bed, bedstead, bedding and curtains	30.00

Bed cord, sleigh bells etc	5.00
1 Cow	12.00
1 Pleasure Sleigh	30.00
1 side saddle and another one	10.00
[The total value reached \$959.67]	

As can be seen, when Eli died he left numerous questions and difficulties behind him, the burden of which fell upon Hannah, the oldest daughter. In her letters to Uncle David at this time it is sad that little gratitude is expressed and his lavish generosity over the years seems unappreciated. Hannah even went so far as to accuse him of removing some of the correspondence with Eli when he was in Lansingburgh! Evidently it was galling to her proud spirit to have to ask his counsel, but by now her Uncle David was the real owner of the Inn and everything in it.

There were irritations, beyond a doubt. The titles to the garden lots of the Tavern, for instance, were in question over a long period of years, so much so that again and again lawyers' opinions were sought. In these matters David, though far away in Fayrefield, was ready with help and advice.

The two letters that follow are revealing:

Fairfield, 17 Jan'y, 1822

My Dear Hannah,

Your letter of 11th Inst. is this day received—am happy to learn you are all well. With our very best wishes for dear Eliza, alias Mrs. Blake to whom, with Mr Blake please present Mrs. Judson's and my affectionate regards, & congratulations. Hope I shall live to see them not only here; but at their own dwelling, in the full enjoyment of domestic happiness.

Please inform the new applicant for the rent of my house at Lansingburgh, that my price has been

\$225 pr annum for the rent; but if the present applicant is a purchaser, I will rent him the dwelling—the barn—the stables—Ice house, all for 200 pr annum & as he is a stranger to me and your Ma, he may pay that sum to her in advance, deducting the annual Interest therefrom as you say he will—or if he cannot conveniently do so he may give me his note for \$200 with int. from the time he takes the house with perfect security. You don't say whether the man saw the garden, or expects it, or knows its worth. If it can be reserved for your use, it will be useful. My Wife informs me, you thought you could have a choice of two or three houses to rent for your own use, that would enable you to keep boarders; I therefore go upon that reliance, that you may continue the practise of boarders, especially, since you have thus happily secured the good will & friendship of Mr Dana, whose continuance with you is a mark of his kind feelings in your unhappy widowed state—for you could not well keep house, without this good man & no better, can you ever find a boarder.

If you move, you must make the rent of my house pay the rent of that which you obtain & on that account, perhaps you had better ask at least, half the rent to be paid down. Perhaps by paying in advance, you would get a house cheaper than to pay at the end of the year. First ask the price of the rent, the lowest terms, & then ask the lowest price for pay in advance.

I am sorry to learn that my brother's estate is so much embarrassed; yet hope you may be able to gratify your wishes in being able comfortably to pay all of them—therefore do not object to your selling any of the loose articles, at your best discretion in order to pay all the just claims or de-

mands that have or may be made. Every article which you do not immediately want, had better be sold if you can obtain its face value. I think the pretty little painted kegs (if not sold) will be very saleable to any new Comer or Tavern Keeper—Bottles etc. For a keepsake of my brother, I should like to have purchased the Cherry room, but on the whole should advise to sell it, as it will recommend and obtain a good price. Perhaps the sign will sell well. If you do give up the house to a new man to rent you must be careful to carry off all the loose things, as they will be lost . . . when we come to clear out a house, it is wonderful to see the contents even in a small family. I hope the man if he comes, will be careful as to fire, so as not to burn up the house etc.

I mean to see brother Aaron & propose that he take your brother Aaron. I hope David and he both attend to their books and will be nice boys . . .

D. Judson

\$225—and a pretty full check a long time since.

When you write, you should always acknowledge the receipt of the last letter. By the substance of yours I take for granted that my last reached you, in which I informed you my terms of rent were

Love and good will

Fairfield, 2 March, 1822

My dear Hannah,

I have read your two letters date Dec 5 & 21st. For the balance of the enclosed account I have never received one cent, therefore have a legal right to send in my claim to your Mother against the estate. The money which Mrs Judson delivered to your Mother after brother's death, I think I ought not to charge.

When I returned from Lansingburgh I did not bring away a single paper written by, or belonging to Eli except a few of my family letters to him. Our correspondence has been great & there must be many of my letters now among his papers, unless he destroyed them, being of no value, except for keepsake as a brother, & yet not worth reading by a disinterested person . . .

As to the garden lotts, as your father held them by peaceable possession 24 or 25 years, I hope they are yours safely by possession, but don't know the laws of the State of New York, trust you may have one or more able friends to advise you. I have suffered so much already, that I do not love to pay out more money for it, unless my demand upon the estate could buy it for your comfort.

I fear some of the demands upon the estate are not perfectly honest & if my brother was living would not come against him. As to my claim, I never promised I would give it to him, nor did he ask it of me. Had he been abundantly able I am certain he would with pleasure have paid it. Some part of my claim may be outlawed for all I know; but the length of time cannot destroy the whole of it, & you must get for me what is legal, altho I have been patient. My claim being large will, I hope, get many necessaries. If the sleigh was here I should be glad to buy it.

I am glad to hear that Eliza is well pleased with her new situation—my love to her and Mr. B. Brother Aaron and Wife have visited us. I told him he must take Aaron next summer, I calculate he will. Hope David and Aaron are good boys & learn all they can. They must love each other and obey their Ma & then I shall love them & calculate to keep them when they grow up, and make men of

them & hope they will be respectable in the world.
I have & shall continue to be distressed for your
loss & your peculiar situation.

Love & good will

D. Judson

CHAPTER NINE

David Judson of Lansingburgh, New York

In the sketch of Eli's children an account of his son, David, was purposely omitted, because more information is available about him than about his brothers and sisters. Many an envious and admiring citizen of Lansingburgh would have pronounced David the flower of them all.

He was born in the Phoenix Inn in 1810, and was named after the Uncle in Fairfield, Connecticut, who had been so staunch a supporter of Eli's brood. Two years later his brother Aaron put in an appearance; he was named after the uncle who lived in Stratford. In the letters, Uncle David usually bracketed the two boys, which indicates that they were ever together at work or play. Their pictures show strongly the differences in their temperaments. A daguerreotype of Aaron, when as a young man he entered the ministry, depicts him as one who lived with noble thoughts, who was at peace with his Lord and himself; kind and gentle in his impulses. Whereas when David, at 38, had his portrait done in oil by a painter named Moore (famous enough at that period to rate a picture now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City) it shows the deep-set eyes,

the positive chin, the fine bone structure of the Judsons. But he looks at variance with the world, and has a pettish, spoiled expression; while the mouth reveals a sharp cynicism. It may as well be stated at once that when material success was his, he became that ogre of the 19th century, the Victorian tyrant, that patriarch whose word was law and whose frustrated females, of necessity, had recourse to the vapors, fainting fits and swoons.

When David was old enough he went to the Common School where he learned fast. Hannah recognized in this brother an ambitious streak; that he, rather than Aaron, was most likely to make the family's fortune. She probably impressed upon him their need of his talents, for he did not marry until he was 33 years old, very late in life for a young man, in those days. His Mother, the good Charlotte, relied upon him mightily, and it was David who was sent to Fairfield when his uncle lay mortally ill. From the household which had always evidenced love and concern toward every member of his family, young David wrote back home:

Dear Mother

My clothes are packed and this is the hour when I intended to start for the west. But Uncle is so ill that I think I will remain here for the present. Aunt would be very unwilling that I should leave her at this time.

Uncle took cold last week—has been more feeble since and now he has the lung fever—he is very low. He coughs—the phlegm appears loose in his windpipe but he cannot raise. So you may judge that he is very low. He reminds me much of father a few days before his death.

The doctor has told me all along that it would not be worth my while to remain here to see the termination of Uncle's illness for he might continue months yet, but now he says he does not think he

will get over this. He may live, however, for some time yet.

I cannot go from here by the way I intend except every other day on Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays on the last of which I would not of course start from here. It is barely possible that I will leave day after to-morrow but I think not until a week from this time, perhaps not then. I must leave soon however to attend to my business at the west. I shall not make so long a stay in Troy or Waterford as I had intended, tho I shall probably spend one & perhaps 2 Sabbaths with you. My business at the west must be attended to. I am anxious to have my buildings at farms west insured, I learn that the house came near burning not long since. Have Mr Blake make an accurate description of the buildings of what materials they are constructed, their size, use and their relative position. This survey must be accurate for if not the insurance will not hold—ask Mr. B. to give his immediate attention to this.

Love to all. While I remain here I will send papers, marked as follows,

Better

Worse

the Same for Uncle

Yours

David Judson

and as of March 3rd,

Dear Mother

By yesterday's mail I informed you of my purpose to remain here to see the result of Uncle's illness. I need wait no longer for that the Lord has taken Uncle to himself. He died last night at two o'clock. The funeral will be held Friday at 2 o'clock P.M.

Aunt is feeble with a cold—has the hopes of the Gospel to support her, on which she appears to lean.

My present design is to remain here until the fore part of next week and then start for the west. I shall probably stay about there until the fore part of the week after.

The blessing of the Lord be with you and the family in which you reside. I may add Uncle's reason continued until the last;

In haste

Yours affectionately

David Judson

So David traveled to the West on business. He decided that coal could make money for him. Among other juicy contracts he negotiated one with the Delaware & Hudson Railroad—and coal certainly did make money for him.

Whether he fell madly in love at the ripe age of 33, or whether he saw a financial advantage in marrying a Lansing descendant, is a matter for conjecture. Certain it is that in 1843 Sarah Hull Allen brought him much land and a substantial dowry. At first they lived in the low beautiful house at the corner of Grove and River Streets, built by Cornelius Lansing, her grandfather. But after Sarah died, David tore down this gem and erected on the riverbank a huge, costly palace which overshadowed all others in the town. It rises high to an uttermost turret, festooned with iron work and gimcracks; beauty is lacking, of grace there is none. The house looms there yet, one of the perfect symbols of class distinction, sharp and decisive as any feudal castle. Within it David lived in pride and arrogance.

Sarah Allen, steadfast by nature, brought up to believe that babies were sent by God, gave birth ten months after their marriage to Edward Allen; in June of 1845 to David Allen; and in March of 1847 to Mary Lansing, she who in later years was called the Saint and was held in veneration by all. Then Sarah quietly gave up life and died.

David dressed in impeccable mourning. He wore a crepe hatband and followed all the conventions; he was pitied by everyone for his widowed state and for the three small children who were his responsibility. He observed a decent interval—waiting five years. Then, in October of 1853, he married Eliza Cowee whose family was also prominent in Troy. When David at 43 took this young lady of 24 to wife, it was a social event of some magnitude. Through the years, as Mother, Aunt, and Grandmother she was prized and loved by each member of the clan. Truly she was a paragon, just to the three stepchildren, adored by them as much as by her own four—Charles, Sarah Eliza, Frederick Cowee and Charlotte Lela. After the depression of 1873, various Judson families, numbering seventeen persons, lived in the big house on the Hudson. Many children raced about the flower and vegetable gardens, enjoyed the excitements of the stables and played along the river's edge. Grandma remained sweet and unruffled, revered by all the household.

David, his ménage in capable hands, left the domesticity to the women. He pampered himself with many hobbies and pursuits. As a young lad he had been apprenticed to a cabinet-maker. Now, in an elaborate workshop, with the finest tools obtainable, he proceeded to turn out very elegant articles made of rich Dominican mahogany. A chair, as graceful as a Chippendale, with rush seat; a mirror in a well-shaped round frame, of unique design; a mammoth cake box for his good friends, the Eddys, up on the Hill in their estate, "Homewood." The Eddys were notoriously high livers and great housekeepers, so this gift from David was more than welcome and adorned a corner of the dining room. And it was a masterpiece: from a six-sided mahogany base two feet wide rose a heavy pedestal which supported a box the size of a small car chassis. This was a foot and a half deep, and was lined with zinc. It was just too high for eager children to reach unless they were naughty enough to climb up on one of the set of twenty William Penn chairs.

The younger generation loved Ann Eliza, but they were

scared to death of David, their stern relative. One of his nieces recounted how her two brothers, crazy for a row on the placid river, got up their courage to pass through the inevitable ordeal in order to use Uncle David's boat. They were well-mannered, so they rang the silver-plated doorbell and were duly admitted to David's study. Here he greeted them with a cold formality and asked what was the state of their souls. Were they saved by God's grace and did they love the Lord Jesus?

For David relished being a dictator—all the week long in the big house and on Sundays in a chapel of his own in Lansingburgh, which he built after an altercation with the Presbyterian Church in Troy. At first Olivet Chapel was used only as a Sunday School, but later it became a bona fide church. David reserved the right to preach from his own pulpit when he wished. There he gave full rein to his propensity for sermons of the hell-fire variety. His texts were taken from a mighty, handsome Bible of large print with his name on the cover in gold. He also installed a retired minister, and as the stove and collar factories brought an increase in population, he secured an assistant—a very presentable young man, full-bodied, full-lipped, and well off besides.

His name was Charles MacGinness, and what more natural than that this eligible bachelor should be a welcome and frequent visitor in the Judson household? A question for David, perhaps, or a consultation with The Saint on some Sunday School matter, or one of the numerous picnics "with cakes galore," were plausible excuses. Perchance, before he could ring for Miss Mary, he would happen to meet pretty Lela in the garden. She was years younger than her half-sister, but both wore iron mitts under their velvet gloves. It was indeed a tumultuous day in the household when, with firm step and downcast eye, Lela demurely announced her engagement to Charles MacGinness. One relative described it as "quite awful," was overcome, and could say no more.

David Judson had the exhaustless energy of a captain of industry. His cabinet making, his business, his billiard table (which some had dared criticize as incompatible with preaching, only to be squelched with a terrible glance) and his two gardens were not sufficient to satisfy it. He proceeded to study medicine, and doctored any who sought his advice. A large and very lovely mahogany chest, which he made, was filled with the powders, pills, drugs, and oils popular at the moment. In the bottom drawer were delicate balances and lustre saucers, used for weighing and mixing.

There is no doubt that David was an important citizen of Lansingburgh—yet one of his nieces who lived in his home for quite a while said, “I loved Uncle Aaron and felt drawn to him, far more than to Uncle David. I could never get near to him, nor did he want me to.” When he died, at the age of 71, a bitter epitaph was pronounced by one who knew him well: “When David Judson died, his family began to live.”

Perhaps David did not live in vain. Could his father’s ghost have known about the magnificent house that his successful son had built? Did Eli’s spirit tiptoe stealthily through the parlors of a night, marveling at the marble mantels, the silver door knobs, the bronze and crystal chandeliers, the carved cornices?

So wide! So spacious! Fit for the descendants of the great Patroon Lansing, from whom he, Eli, had bought so small a house. The comparison would have delighted him. Let us hope that the old dreamer found there, after death, all that he had coveted for himself and his children and had failed to achieve.

